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HOME
PRINCIPLES
IN
BOYHOOD
AND
OTHER STORIES

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OME PRINCIPLES IN BOYHOOD.



HOME PRINCIPLES IN BOYHOOD.



WEIGHTY QUESTIONS. Page 92.

HOME PRINCIPLES IN BOYHOOD.

And Other Stories for the Young.



IN SEARCH OF A PLACE. Page 76.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS,

LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.



HOME PRINCIPLES

IN

BOYHOOD,

A Tale for the Young.

" The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be set on high."—PROV. xxix. 25.

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HOME PRINCIPLES IN BOYHOOD.

CHAPTER I.

UNCLE HUGH.



"THERE'S Uncle Hugh! There he is, I'm sure!" exclaimed Henry, his pale, sorrowful, and expecting face suddenly lighting up, as he saw a waggon stop at a small house on the opposite side of the street.

"Run, child," said the friendly neighbour at whose house we were—"run and ask him to come here. He'll find it dull enough over there, I reckon."

I stood at the window, watching Henry as he went and delivered his message. Uncle Hugh patted him on the head. It looked kind.

"Oh dear!" I sighed, without knowing it. Uncle Hugh tied his horse to a green post, and followed Henry to the house where we were. His heavy tread

was soon heard in the entry. Mrs. French left her cooking, and went to meet him.

"Well, the poor lady is gone!" she said, showing him into the sitting-room, where Agnes and I were. "She thought much about seeing you before she died. She said you were the only relative they had. There's the two youngest, Hugh and Agnes. That's Henry," pointing to my brother. "He is the oldest, and not very old either."

My uncle stalked into the room.

"That's Hugh is it?" fixing his large gray eyes on me. "He is a stout boy. He looks as if he could dig potatoes as well as anybody."

He took off his coat, and sat down.

"This is the girl—the youngest. She looks dreadfully like her mother. Mrs. Gray wants her," drawing Agnes towards her, and smoothing down her apron.

"That's Agnes, is it? The girl!" said Uncle Hugh.

"I am seeing to the dinner; so you'll excuse me," said Mrs. French, at the same time going towards the kitchen.

My uncle nodded.

"Let's see. He's the one that's got my name," he said, after staring at us all round, as we sat bolt upright, staring at him in return, and pointing at me in particular with his hard, horny finger.

"Yes, that's Hugh," said Henry.

"Well, Hugh, are you a good fellow at work?" asked he.

"Yes, sir," I whispered.

"Hugh is a good scholar," said Henry, ready to back me up in the good graces of my relative. "The master says he is."

"Humph!" grunted our uncle; "and what does that amount to?"

Mr. French now came in, the head of the household under whose roof we were, with whom my uncle presently went out to look after the horse and waggon.

"Am I named for him?" I whispered to Henry, as soon as his back was turned; "with a nose like that! I want to know."

In fact, Uncle Hugh had not made a pleasant first impression upon my mind. "Is he the one that's to take care of us?" I said, looking at Henry. Henry looked at me. He answered nothing, but turned and glanced wistfully over to the little house that had so long been our home, now deserted and desolate. Tears came into his eyes.

Let me now tell you our situation. Our father, a respected schoolmaster, had been dead nearly three years, leaving my mother and her three children, with slender means and still more slender health, to rear us up as God-fearing and dutiful children. By

economy and industry, she contrived to live comfortably, with what aid Henry and I could occasionally render. Henry was now twelve, and I had just entered my eleventh year. In one short week our mother sickened and died; and, as I now think, it was through her overtasked efforts for our support. How kind and tender-hearted were the neighbours, as one and another took turns to nurse her and care for us! How many delicate bits did they bring her, which, as she could not take them (for she was too sick to be thus tempted), were bestowed on us. Through the week we were kept at school, never dreaming what a sad and dreary Sunday was in store for us. On Saturday night she died, and we were taken to the house of friendly Mrs. French, where our uncle met us. He arrived at noon on Tuesday, the day after the funeral.

Mr. Hugh Fisher was the eldest brother of my father. No great intimacy had ever subsisted between the brothers; not from any fault of my father, but for the grudge always harboured by Uncle Hugh against his brother, because he preferred head-work to hand-work, his books to his hoe. My father had contrived to gather together a little learning, sufficient to teach a grammar-school with much acceptance to his patrons. His ruddy countenance, his bright eye, and hearty laugh, are among our earliest and pleasantest remembrances. How it would have

been had he lived—ah! that we cannot tell. Consumption seized him, and in a few months he was gone. Of Uncle Hugh we, as children, knew very little. I remember the remark more than once made by a neighbour—"It was a shame that Mr. Fisher, well off as he was, could not do something for his brother's widow, if it was only just to send a barrel of apples or a bag of potatoes."

It is certain no apples or potatoes ever came, nor did my mother ever complain of it. "The boys would earn apples and potatoes before long," she said.

Finding her end drawing nigh, she determined to send for Mr. Hugh Fisher. She felt that if he were not a tender-hearted man, he was far from being hard-hearted; and she was willing to think that if he had not shown that interest in his brother's bereaved family that might have been expected, neither had she, perhaps, communicated with him as freely and openly as she might have done.

A letter was despatched, begging him to come to ——.

"To have seen him, to have consulted with him about the children, to have committed them to his care—if she could but have done this, then should she die content."

This she was not permitted to do; but every day of her life, ever since we were born, she committed

us to the merciful care of our Father in heaven. Over the sad funeral scenes which followed, and the desolation which came over me when the coffin which contained her dear form was lowered into the grave, I will not now linger. They are fresh in my memory; and notwithstanding the goodness and mercy which have crowned my later days, those scenes are still painful to recall.

After dinner, we went over to the little half of a tenement which had long been our happy home, and our uncle began to look into our mother's affairs. Anxious to return home as soon as possible (it being in the height of spring farm-work), he began to despatch business as speedily as he could. Henry was sent out to ascertain the amount of any little accounts which the family owed. A small wallet, containing my mother's "papers," which had always been sacredly locked up in a trunk kept in the upper bureau-drawer, was now lying open on the table, while my uncle had turned round, and was sitting cross-legged before the fire, smoking his pipe. I went towards the table to look at the wallet.

"Let things alone," said my uncle, marking the movement. "Don't you know, boys must learn never to touch?"

Awed and frightened, I shrunk into the chair. A knock at the door, and Mr. Henry (a lawyer sent by Mr. French) came in. They sat down and talked,

while I crept round by the fire, looking and listening with a sad and heavy heart.

"A little memorandum here," said my uncle, turning round to the table. "If the books could be kept (she writes) and the debts paid, she wished them to be equally divided among the children. Humph!"

"Are there many?" asked the lawyer.

"There they are;" and Uncle Hugh pointed to a bookcase crammed with books.

"Oh ay; yes; your brother's, I suppose," said the lawyer, scanning them where he sat. "He was a reading man, and a very excellent one. One of our best schoolmasters, Mr. Fisher."

"Humph!" responded my uncle; "I have no great opinion of bookish men. They are never worth a shilling. Books are moths, I'm thinking—moths on our time. Our fathers did not make such a fuss about books and schools; and who thrived better than they?"

Henry now came back with some accounts, and we were sent out of the room.

What to do with the children, was the most perplexing question of all, but it was pretty nearly settled by evening. Mrs. Gray, a friend of my mother, asked for Agnes. She loved the child, and the child loved her. Agnes was then carried "home." "This is your home now," said Henry, as we stopped at the front gate, and looked up to Mrs. Gray's house.

"And yours and Hugh's," added Agnes.

"No; I'm going to stay at Mr. French's, close by, you know; and Hugh is going to Uncle Hugh's house. He is going in the waggon to have a ride," said Henry, in a half-coaxing, half-soothing tone.

"No, no!" cried Agnes, looking distressed. "Mother has gone, and now Hugh goes, and you go too! I will stay at Mrs. French's too. I don't want to stay here alone—I don't!"

"When Mrs. Gray loves you so!" said Henry. "Little girls cannot do without mothers, and Mrs. Gray will be your mother. She will get you a little chair; and do you not remember the dear little cup she said she had got for you?"

The soothing tones of Henry's voice, with the image of the little cup and chair, had a quieting effect upon the child's mind, who was very docile, and always ready to be pleased.

Thursday morning Uncle Hugh was going to set out for home. Henry and I slept together at Mrs. Gray's, so as to take supper and breakfast with Agnes. I awoke in the morning with a dull, heavy sense of something formidable and disagreeable weighing upon me. In the dim morning light, Mrs. Gray's white counterpane, and the picture of St. John over the mantelpiece, quite puzzled me. "Where am I?" I exclaimed, starting up and rubbing my eyes.

"Where are we?" asked Henry, who was already

wide awake; indeed, he had not slept, for the sad thoughts of our approaching separation. "Where are we? Why, here we are!" It was true enough, but not very satisfactory. Yes; here we were, in Mrs. Gray's best chamber; and here was I, having just slept my last night with Henry.

"Oh dear!" I sighed, sliding down into bed, and covering my head with the clothes.

"I think so much," added Henry with a sigh. "Oh, how happy we used to be! Who would have thought of this two weeks ago! All three of us in different places!"

"All four," said I; "mother, you know."

"She—down in the earth!" Henry choked; then, plunging his head into the pillow, he cried outright. It was the first time he had fairly cried. He had looked pale, very pale and sorrowful; but he had tried all he could to comfort Agnes and me, telling us that mother had gone to heaven, that God wanted her, and how glad she would be to be with Jesus Christ. But the last breaking up—it was too much for the poor fellow, and he gave way to an uncontrollable burst of sorrow.

"Henry! dear Henry!" I cried, throwing my arms around him, myself now turning comforter, "don't you know what you have said? Let us be men. We have got to be ourselves now! Dear Henry, God will not leave us. Don't you remember what mother used

to say, — how He who hears the young ravens will not turn a deaf ear to the cry of the young orphans."

Henry still sobbed. The chamber door gently opened. Agnes, in her night-gown, peeped in, then ran laughing towards the bed.

"I came to wake you up. Mrs. Gray said I might," she said, climbing up the side of the bed. Agnes nestled down between us, — Henry with his face plunged into the pillow, and I sitting bolt upright, trying to be a man. Agnes put her face down by Henry's, and stroked his hair.

"I think I am the one to feel the worst," I said, feeling very pitifully. "I am sure I am. I must go a long way off, and you are both going to stay with those you know. I love Mrs. Gray and the Frenches, but Uncle Hugh—"

"Hugh, you will write to me often, won't you?" said Henry, rolling over, and wiping his eyes with his shirt-sleeves.

"What are you going there for, Hugh?" asked Agnes. "Mrs. Gray will let you stay here. I'll ask her if she won't."

"It is kind in uncle to give Hugh a home, Agnes. You know we have got no home now," said Henry, with a quivering lip.

"Shall we never have our own home again — never?" asked the child, with a sad wondering, as if

she thought it was a strange world she had been born into.

"Yes, Agnes!" I exclaimed; "when I get my education; when I am a man,—a minister, maybe, —then we shall have our own home again."

"That's a great way off," said Henry, sadly, "a great way off!" Poor little fellow! he never lived to see the day.

There we all sat, our arms around each other, not speaking for some minutes. "Hugh," said the eldest, at last breaking the silence, "I hope you will remember one thing, that God is at Uncle Hugh's as well as here. You must keep his commandments," he added, in a tone of deep solemnity. "You must pray every night and morning, just as we always used to do at home. It makes no difference where we are, about such things as these. You know, Hugh, God has been our heavenly Father for a great while; and now he'll have to be father and mother too."

"I know it," I answered, "and I mean to pray there. I am sure I would not leave it off on any account. Don't you remember how mother used to pray, and what she used to say about it to us?"

"That is just what I was thinking of," said Henry.

"And I shall pray too," added Agnes. "Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me;' and I am a little child, am I not, Henry?"

Mrs. Gray now tapped at the door, and putting in her kind, motherly face, told us to jump up and dress ourselves, for breakfast was almost ready. At seven o'clock, Uncle Hugh's waggon drove up to the door. Breakfast was not quite over, but I had finished all but my half-tumbler of milk.

"Yes, Hugh; and you must come down and visit us," said Mrs. Gray, in a cheerful tone, seeing Henry go towards the back window, with a tear in his eye. "We will write to you, and you must write to us. Agnes will learn to write also; won't you, Agnes? And here is a nice bit of something to take in your pocket, for a luncheon by the way. You will be hungry by-and-by." And so she talked, leaving us no time to dwell upon the parting.

"O Mrs. Gray, do ask Uncle Hugh if he may come down to see us," whispered Henry, twitching Mrs. Gray by the sleeve. "Please do. He'll mind it more from you. Then we can count when to see Hugh again."

Meanwhile, I drank my milk, pocketed the luncheon, shouldered my bundle,—all my effects having been reduced to so small a compass as to be carried in a handkerchief,—and marched out at the door. Mrs. Gray ran down the steps, to bargain for the time of my visiting them.

"Maybe, maybe," answered Uncle Hugh, "seeing he's a pretty smart boy."

"Hugh is smart," said Henry, in an under-tone; "so I have no doubt he'll come, if it depends on that;" and his countenance lighted up.

The bundle was hoisted into the waggon, which I soon followed, after kissing all round with considerably more courage than I expected. The prospect of a ride took something from the pain of parting. "Good-bye, Henry! Good-bye, Agnes! Good-bye, dear, good Mrs. Gray!"

Uncle Hugh whipped up his horse, and we set off at a rapid rate. The brisk air of a cool June morning was reviving to the spirits, and gave an elastic thrill to the whole system; so that, as we passed by one familiar object after another,—the mill, the bridge, the tan-yard, and the cove,—the good-bye glances did not touch my heart as they might have done. I was curious to know what we should see in the different towns through which we should pass. My uncle named them, and bade me keep a good look-out. Uncle Hugh was not inclined to be sociable. Mile after mile we rode on, and not a word was spoken. At last we reached the outskirts of a village, where a tall sign-post marked an inn of no mean dimensions. My uncle reined in his horse.

"Cool morning!" said a burly-looking man, standing in the door.

"Cool enough for June, I'm thinking," was the reply, and Uncle Hugh jumped out. "You can stretch

your legs here, if you like, my boy," he said, addressing me, "or stay in the waggon." Glad of an opportunity of stretching my legs, I was over the side of the waggon in a second. After watering and tying his horse, he entered the tavern, and called for a glass of grog.

Though grog-drinking was more common then than now-a-days, my mother was a strict adherent to temperance rules; and the idea of grog-drinking was associated, in my mind, with whatever was vulgar, as well as wrong. A very wretched shop, in the street where we lived, served to illustrate, in a very lively manner, all our mother's reasonings upon the subject. I remember feeling a sense of mortification on seeing Uncle Hugh stirring his toddy and raising the glass to his lips. I turned my back, and went out into the portico before the door. After finishing my luncheon, and drinking some clear sparkling water from the pump, we were ready to start again; nor had we gone far, before my uncle graciously asked,—

"Well, Hugh, have you ever cast about in your mind what you mean to do when you get bigger?"

"No, sir; not exactly. I want to get an education first: then I'll can tell better."

"Humph! An education! and what does that mean?"

I looked up, to see what he meant. "Can it be," thought I, "that Uncle Hugh does not know what getting an education is?"

"Humph! Yes," he presently repeated, "what does getting an education mean?—that's the question!"

I saw he meant it for me to answer.

"Why, finding out what other people know; getting all sorts of knowledge from books; filling up the mind with useful things. Mother used to say, knowledge is what people can't take from us."

"Humph! all fol-de-rol, in my opinion!" said he, at the same time violently jerking the reins.

I looked up surprised, if not alarmed, and simply said, "Sir?"

"Fol-de-rol, in my opinion," persisted my uncle, in a sharp tone. "All fol-de-rol! Your father might have been worth something, if it hadn't been for his education. It never did him any good. It shortened his days. Now, my father was a perfectly healthy man, and when he died, it was of an epidemic fever. It's all fudge,—making so much ado for the sake of a little learning. There's Squire Kelly, all run out! There's our minister, sickly, puling fellow! can't hoe a dozen rigs of corn without a pain or something. There was your father,—a likely boy as need be, till he took a notion for books; never good for anything after that. I'd as soon one of my boys took to stealing as to learning! I am glad to say they don't. They take after me in that."

I well remember looking at him earnestly, from

top to toe, to see what manner of man he was; for it was the first time I had ever heard such opinions advanced.

My mother had taken great pains to foster in us a taste for reading. Reading, she said—reading, of course, good books—was a great safeguard for youth. She always sympathized with us in our studies; and so strong was my own early relish for reading and study, that I hardly remember the time when I did not suppose a good education one of the most desirable things in the world, next to a good conscience; or, perhaps I should say, next to becoming a sincere Christian. Our mother always taught us the indispensableness of a new heart and a right spirit, in order to become the real children of God, or that we might have a good hope of reaching heaven at last. My father had delighted in my early taste for books; and, before his death, I had made some progress in the Latin grammar.

"Hugh must have an education," had always been a sort of settled thing in the family. After my father's death, my mother always spoke hopefully of the matter, ever declaring that there were more ways than one to bring about a desirable object.

In this light, one may well suppose that the opinions advanced by Uncle Hugh were particularly distasteful. In fact, I was not quite sure how to take them. Was he not talking for fun? For fun!

there was nothing in his hard, brown, cold face that looked liked fun. After scanning him sideways a good while, and looking at the horse's head, I was about asking him whether there were no schools up his way, when another village came in sight, and he reined in at another tavern.

The remainder of the ride was long and dull. The exhilarating morning air had given place to a warm noonday sun. I was tired with the long ride, —the longest I had ever taken; and to the ever-lengthening distance from all I knew and loved, was added an uneasiness in my mind about the new and strange way of thinking Uncle Hugh had.

I wished I were out of the jolting waggon. Anything but riding with such a red pug-nose. This was the way of venting my spleen upon my uncle. I felt angry and provoked. Just as if my parents did not know as well as he!

It was two o'clock before we reached Springville. My uncle's farm was a border farm, between Springville and Loudon, off the main road east of the village. It was the homestead farm, and was the spot where my father was born, which accounted for my greater readiness to accompany Uncle Hugh. He had often told us about it, and we had often wished to see it, especially the pond and Pilot Mountain, where he used to go with the boys. I must confess I was a little disappointed on coming in sight of a black, two-

story house, which Uncle Hugh pointed out with his whip as "the place." Two large barns, both newer and better-looking than the house, were behind it; a well, with its long pole and iron-bound bucket, were prominent in the yard, which was full of logs, fire-wood, harrows, and I know not what. Two dogs came running out to meet us. A woman, with gray hair, fat and sun-burnt, stood in the door, staring hard at me, as we drove into the yard.

"Well, yer come back, and fetched one with yer."

"I guess so."

"Well, what's the youngster's name?"

I had jumped out of the waggon, and was taking out my bundle.

"My name is Hugh," said I, seeing my uncle left me to announce myself.

"Well! that's lucky."

Ah! I was not so sure of that.

"You look a sight like your father. Well, come in and get something to eat."

I followed my aunt into the house with a dull, heavy pain about my heart. I shall pass over dinner and supper, and my introduction to Nat and Bill, my cousins, of fifteen and seventeen years of age. Oh, that long, lonely afternoon! There were the dogs and the pigs, the barn and barn-yard, the hens and the geese, the bee-hive, too, in a sunny knoll behind the corn-house. These, under other circumstances,

would have been subjects of deep interest to me; but, somehow or other, I found myself creeping away by the stone wall, and looking wistfully down the road whence we came, straining my eyes for—I hardly knew what. Then I wandered down behind the barn, and threw myself on the sweet, green turf, and thought of my dear mother, who now lay beneath it. Oh, and I really wished I were there too, by her side! Nobody loving, nobody caring for me here! "What shall I do?" I passionately exclaimed. "What shall I do? I cannot live here! It is not like my home! It is not like Mrs. Gray's, nor Mrs. French's!" and I burst into a flood of tears.

Bed-time brought some relief. "Where is the boy to sleep?" asked my uncle.

"With Jem, to be sure," answered my aunt. "Where else would anybody expect him to sleep?"

"Ay, ay," answered Uncle Hugh; and, bundle in hand, I followed my aunt to the chamber,—a large, airy, rough-looking room, over the wood-house.

"Who is Jem?" I asked, timidly. "Am I going to sleep with him?"

"Jem is the man that lives here. He'll be home to-morrow. You are going to sleep with him. I don't know whether he likes boys or not; but I guess he won't be particular."

I wanted to ask more, but was afraid; when, after

smoothing down the bed, she pointed to a red chest of drawers, and told me to "put my clothes away in the lowest any time, not to-night;" then, bidding me sleep like a porpoise, and be a good boy, she left the chamber.

"Sleep like a porpoise! I wonder if she knows how porpoises sleep?" I muttered to myself, as her steps were lost in the distance. On casting my eyes around the room, I spied several coarse pictures pasted up on one of the walls. I hastened to make them out; but the fading light only served to show the outlines of General Washington, whose figure was well known to me by two pictures which I had already seen of him. The pictures somehow gave me great delight; they seemed home-like, and I set about wondering who pasted them up. "Oh, if it's only Jem!" and the very thought gave me a fellow-feeling for him.

At first I did not like to lie down in the strange, old wood-house chamber, all alone, and so far off from the rest of the family. I contrasted it with the night before—only the night before—in Mrs. Gray's best chamber, under her beautiful white counterpane, with the sweet face of St. John looking down upon Henry and me, like a good angel watching over us.

"What is to become of me?" I cried aloud. I wanted to scream, "Mother! Father! Henry! Agnes!" Oh, could not some of them,—could not one of them

hear me? The scalding tears would come; they came thick and fast. "What shall I do? what shall I do?" I cried aloud, tumbling on to the bed. After a little while I got up again and kneeled down to pray. Henry's words in the morning came forcibly upon me. "I will mind Henry," I said; "Henry is such a good boy; and it will be minding mother too."

After this duty was done—a duty always enjoined by our mother, both by her example and instructions—I again jumped upon the bed; and, although it seemed as if I had no heart to sleep, sleep came unawares; and before long, I daresay, I was fairly, though unwittingly, obeying the injunction of my aunt; though whether she did really know how porpoises slept, I never was able satisfactorily to ascertain.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST WEEK AT UNCLE HUGH'S.

THE next forenoon, my uncle gave me my choice, to go down into the field with the men and boys, or stay and assist about the house, and get acquainted with matters and things. Upon the whole, I chose the latter.

After bringing in some wood to kindle a fire in the oven, setting out the milk-pans to dry in the sun, and feeding the four little pigs, I strayed away into the sitting-room, in hope to get sight of a book. There was an ostrich egg-shell under the glass, and two peacocks' feathers waving over the top of it, which served to interest me for a while, recalling all I had read about ostriches and peacocks, and making a little talk between my aunt and myself. Ostrich egg-shells and peacock feathers, but nothing like a book, met the eye. Then I strolled into the barns, climbed up the hay-stack, examined the stalls, wish-

ing all the time in my heart for Henry. "If Henry were only here! if Henry were only here!"

While striving hard to drive away dull thoughts by swinging on a beam in the new barn, a man stalked in with two flails on his shoulder. He stopped on seeing me, and asked, "Who is this?"

"Hugh Fisher," I answered.

"Not old Hugh Fisher," he said, his lips puckering with a smile.

"He's my uncle. I've come to stay with him. My mother is—dead!" It was hard to say it.

"Shake hands, Hugh, then," he said, in a friendly tone. "I know something how to feel for you. I lost my mother about your age;" and seizing my hand, he gave it a feeling grip. From that moment I felt that I had a friend, though who the man was, or where he came from, I could not tell.

His coarse blue home-spun shirt covered a tall, lean, awkward body; and his face was pitted by the small-pox, and shaded by long grizzly hair. In spite of a personal appearance which was anything but prepossessing at first sight, there was a friendly expression in his eye and around his mouth, which showed that he had a heart, and a large one too.

"This is not like where you came from, is it?" he said, flinging his flails upon a rail. "How do you think you shall like to be a farmer's boy?"

"I don't know," I said; "it doesn't seem like home here."

"Most likely not," he answered. "You must take time for that. It will take a little while to get used to things; but we have got plenty of sweet air, and good, rich milk."

"But it seems so different!" I sighed.

"You'll get used to it. Only make up your mind to be contented. That's it."

"I can't make up my mind to any such thing—I know I can't!" and the hot tears gushed from my eyes. I was ashamed of it, and turned to go out at the barn-door.

"Oh yes, you can," he said, soothingly. "Oh yes, you can. This ain't the worst place that ever was. Should you not rather be here than be a soldier going to battle?"

"I had just as soon be Washington, or some such as he," answered I.

"But where there is one Washington, there are a thousand who have to do the dirty work; so that a thousand chances to one you'd be among the men, and not among the officers."

"You've read about him?" I said eagerly.

"And heard about him too. My father served under him."

I looked at the man with curiosity and interest.

"Suppose you go down into the field with me,"

said he, looking for his hoe. "I must go to work."

We set out together, talking as we went. On reaching the edge of the potato-field, I said I wished I could live at his house; "but, maybe, I can come down and see you sometimes, if I knew where you lived, and what is your name."

"My name is Jem," said the man.

"Are you the Jem I am going to sleep with?" I cried, with a pleased surprise; "the Jem that lives here?"

"Exactly so," answered he.

"I am so glad," I exclaimed.

Then the sun, which had not seemed to shine for many days, gleamed through the clouds of my heart.

The family rose early, and went to bed early. When bed-time came, I began to wonder if I could say my prayers before Jem. I felt uneasy and anxious, and tried if I could not contrive to get up-stairs and get all through before he came up. So, taking Time by the forelock, as soon as supper was over I scampered off and bolted into my chamber like a locomotive. But, lo! Jem was already there, undressing.

"I am dreadfully tired," said Jem. I did not speak, but stood, perplexed, on the spot where I had suddenly stopped, not knowing what to do.

"Anything the matter?" asked Jem, who could not help noticing my puzzled expression.

"Nothing particular," said I, going out again.

"Hallo!" cried Jem. "Something's on your mind. Out with it! You'll feel all the better for it."

"Nothing particular," I persisted, turning round and coming back. I was tempted to give up my prayers that night. I was sure I could not say them before Jem. He a man, and I nothing but a boy! I began to undress, and, for the first time since I could remember, was tempted to lie down upon my bed without prayer. I turned down the sheet, then sat down on the bedside, then went to the window. A severe conflict was going on within my heart. To pray, or not to pray? "The fear of man, which bringeth a snare," sorely and strongly tempted me, for once, to forego my accustomed devotional duty. Boy as I was, there were the world, sin, and the devil, on one side; my conscience, my known and understood duty, my obligations to God, on the other. I as thoroughly understood what my duty was in the matter, at that age, as I do now. In neglecting it, I should have done it deliberately, and with a full knowledge of the guilt. In doing so, I should, in fact, have denied God; I should have been ashamed to own him before men. It was the sin and shame of Peter, when he was afraid to own an acquaintance with Jesus, his Master, on account of what people would say. So was I, at that moment,

ashamed to own that I held intercourse with my heavenly Friend, my God and Father. Ashamed of God!

> "Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend
> On whom our hopes of heaven depend!"

Nobody, who had seen me at that moment, could have supposed that I was doing a great wrong to my soul—the greatest wrong that can be done to the soul. I was not stealing, I was not swearing, or telling a lie, or drinking, or playing cards—no, none of these things, which people could see, and say, "How wicked it is!" It was a heart sin: not less a sin for that. It was not a sin against man: it was a sin against God; and God looketh at the heart. It was a moment full of tremendous issues. It was the forming period of my life. I was called earlier than most boys to take a stand for myself, for or against the principles in which I had been educated. Should I now abandon those religious habits in which I had been reared from infancy, or should I abide by them? Should I carry them out, or throw them aside? If they were important for me at home, how much more important, as safeguards and means of religious improvement, away from home. I tremble when I think of it. I tremble for other boys in similar situations, because their future commonly depends upon what they do and think while they are boys. Think of that, boys; and when you go away

from home, do not, in a cowardly way, abandon the good home principles in which you have been brought up.

Jem got into bed. He asked me what I was looking out of the window at, and why I did not come to bed. I told him I was watching the fire-flies; which was the truth, though not the whole truth. Presently he began to breathe hard; then I knew he was asleep, and then I kneeled down and prayed, and afterwards crept into bed. But a voice seemed speaking in my ear, and it said, "Coward!" I turned over and over, arranged and rearranged my pillow; but it still kept saying, "Coward! coward!" yes, and something within answered that it was but too true—too true.

As any one might see, this secret way of getting over with my devotional duties, well as it might serve for one night, could not answer for every night, nor, indeed, for the second. Was this sneaking struggle to go on every bed-time. Ah! how much better to be honest and true at first! Remember that.

Well, the second night came. I meant to be sure and go up first this time, and finish my duty by the time Jem came up. But, somehow or other, again he got the start of me. I felt worse the second night than I did the first. Cowardly I knew I was, but the Tempter kept saying, "No matter; say your prayers after you get into bed. God can hear you in

the bed as well as out of it." But I remembered our mother had settled that point a long while before, when I once asked her about it. "Hugh," she said, "if you wanted to ask a great favour of a great king, upon whom your life, your goods, your friends, your happiness, all depended, would you dare approach him in a careless, thoughtless way? Would you not choose the most respectful, decorous, and becoming manner, such as would befit your dependent situation? You would not come carelessly and indifferently to God, the King of kings!"

Tumbling into bed and praying, when I was not sick, looked too much like carelessness, and I was afraid to do it.

"Jem!" was called from the bottom of the stairs. "Jem!" It was my uncle's voice. Jem drew on his trousers, and went down. "How lucky!" I chuckled. Seizing my little Testament, and hastily reading over a few verses by the fast fading twilight, I threw myself on my knees in prayer. I had scarcely composed my mind for the solemn duty when Jem was heard returning to the chamber! My first impulse was to jump up. The awful question, "Are you ashamed of Jesus Christ, your only Friend, now your father and mother are gone?" came pointedly to my conscience. I pressed my hand against my eyes: fear, doubt, shame, duty, conscience—all spoke together. That instant was a turning-point. I *kept*

kneeling! The door opened, and I kept kneeling! God be praised, he gave me strength to confess him before the world; for Jem and the wood-house chamber were all the world to me. Jem stopped, as he opened the door and saw me on my knees. It was very, very still. My heart beat violently, as, in a low and almost inarticulate tone, I continued before my God in prayer. How different were my feelings, when I at last arose, from what they had before been! A quiet, peaceful feeling came over me, and it did not seem as if mother, dear mother, was very far off. Perhaps she was then one of those ministering spirits which the Bible says are sometimes sent on errands of love to this world of trial.

Jem and I both went to bed without saying anything. I was almost asleep, when he turned over, and, laying his brawny arm on my shoulder, said, "Hugh, who taught you to pray?"

"My mother," answered I.

"So mine did me."

"Do you?" I asked.

"Ay, that's a master question, and put by a boy like you too, Hugh. Do I? I ought to. I hold to people's praying, if it's no more than civil; and I think folk ought to pray in their families—that would teach the young folk. If the old folk don't, what can you expect?"

"Because old folk don't, that's no reason young

folk shouldn't, though—is it, Jem?" I asked. Having done my duty, I felt strong.

"Hugh," said Jem, "Hugh, my boy! I say, Hugh, you've got what I call pluck; and it's worth more to anybody, my father used to say, than all the silver and gold in the world." With these words Jem turned on to his other side. Alas! how little he knew me.

Sunday morning came. It was very beautiful. I rose early, carefully washing and dressing myself before any one was astir.

Jem was all the while in a deep sleep. When he awoke, he started up, rubbing his eyes, and asked what time it was. I did not know, but told him nobody was up.

"Late enough, though, I'll be bound," said Jem, bestirring himself.

"Do we walk or ride to church, or how?" I asked.

"How, I guess," answered Jem. "That's the way they generally go. Your uncle's folk are not much of go-to-meeting hands—that's the long and short of it."

"Don't they go at all?" I asked anxiously.

"Pretty much so-so," answered Jem. "It is not as I was brought up."

"Nor I," I added. "No, indeed! we always went to meeting, in all sorts of weather; and I think it is wicked to stay at home. It is not keeping the Sab-

bath day holy to stay at home when you can go to church."

"Good doctrine," said Jem, leaving the room.

When we met at breakfast, how dirty and lazy did everybody look—sleepy and listless too. There was none of the busy activity of week-days, except in my aunt, who was getting a rich breakfast of pancakes and fried pork and potatoes ready. When the breakfast-horn sounded, my uncle was whittling on a log in the yard, Nat was playing with the dog, and Bill was arranging his fishing-tackle.

"Is this Sunday?" I asked myself.

After breakfast, I whispered to Nat, and asked what time we went to meeting.

"That is according to how you go."

"How do you go? How do you commonly go?"

"We are not much of going-to-meeting folks," answered Nat.

"If you don't go, what do you do?" I asked, impatiently perhaps.

"Do? why, whatever we have a mind to! Go a-fishing, or over to Pilot Mountain, or over to the village—enough to do. Bill says he's going trouting. I guess I shall go too; and, Hugh, have you not a mind to join us? At anyrate, I want just to borrow that nice little rod of yours that shuts in so snugly."

Nat said this in a more friendly tone than I

thought he could use. Nat and Bill were no great talkers. They generally went about their business, they minding nobody, and nobody minding them.

Going trouting! How my father used to tell us about going trouting, and how I should like to go! Of all things, what would be pleasanter than going trouting! Trouting where my father used to go, and following up the little babbling brooks!

Then, too, I had his rod. It was the only thing I took, besides my Bible and my clothes. My mother gave it to me soon after he died. She said, "Here, Hugh, this shall be yours; keep it for your father's sake."

Father used to love to go out and sit on the quiet banks, and under the shady trees, or follow up the streams, on pleasant Saturday afternoons. Henry and I often used to go with him. The rod was composed of many pieces, to be lengthened or shortened at pleasure. I had shown it to Nat as my choice treasure, though, as yet, I had never fished; and this was the only time my cousins seemed to take any special interest in me, or anything pertaining to me. I was a sorrowful little orphan then. The idea of trying to comfort or make another happy, I do not suppose ever entered their minds. They went upon the maxim that each must take care of himself. But now Nat wanted to borrow my rod to go trouting, and he wanted me to go too, but—it was Sunday.

"If you are going," said Nat, supposing he saw "yes" in my earnest, glowing face, "get off your best clothes—mother won't allow that—and run, bring down your rod—be quick!"

"Why, it is Sunday," I said at length.

"What of that?" asked my cousin.

"What are you talking about?" asked Bill, issuing from the wood-house with his fishing-tackle. "You are going with us, ain't you, Hugh?"

"Why, it is Sunday," I again said, my heart beating quickly.

"What of that, I say?" cried Nat, in a vexed tone.

"I daresay Hugh thinks we must do nothing but sing psalms," said Bill, with a tone of voice which I did not relish.

"No such thing!" I answered excitedly; "but I do think Sunday is no day to go fishing on. Doing so is not keeping it as the Bible says, I am sure."

"Bible says! What do you know about what the Bible says?" asked Bill.

"Yes, indeed, what does he know?" joined Nat.

"I know it says, 'Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy: in it thou shalt do no work.'"

"No work!" exclaimed Nat; "that's my doctrine. I don't go for work, except when the hay or grain must be got in."

"But you do trout," said Bill, giggling. "Yes; so do I; and Hugh will be ready enough to let his

rod go and do the work, and he'll be glad enough to eat the trout, if we'll catch 'em. That's the way with these Sunday folk, father says. There's Squire Jones: he himself goes to meeting, while he don't mind starting his men off with a drove of cattle on Sunday morning, eh!"

"Well, Hugh ain't a man. So, are you going, or not going?" cried Nat, with an impatient jerk of his shoulders. "Nobody will mind or care, I guess, whether you go or not."

"No. I should like, of all things, to go trouting," I answered, "but I cannot go on Sunday. My mother would not be willing, I am very sure."

Bill muttered, "I wonder what she knows about it now;" while Nat said, "Well, you won't object to lending me your rod, and I'll pay you in fish to-night, when I get home."

Oh dear! what a perplexity presented itself to my mind! How could I refuse to lend it to him? How could I dare to say No? I certainly should have been most willing to lend it to him on any other day, and I should have been glad if I had possessed anything of interest to my cousins, and glad of any way of obliging them; but letting out my rod for Sunday work—that was the rub. I put my hands into my pockets, and pulled them out again. I kicked the chips, and ground the heel of my Sunday shoe into the ground.

"What in all the world are you thinking of? I want your fishing-rod, Hugh."

The Sabbath, and the various ways of desecrating it, had been much canvassed in the town where we used to live, and it so happened that my parents had entered with a deep, intelligent interest into the subject; and young as we were, Henry and I had been thoroughly instructed on the Sabbath-keeping side of the argument. How little they thought that, as a boy, I ever should be called to stand up alone and test the principles in which they instructed me. The point now was, that I should not only not break the Sabbath myself, but that I should in no way aid or abet others in so doing, remotely or directly, nor knowingly and willingly let my property violate the Sabbath.

"Oh dear!" cries the Sabbath-keeping owner of stock in a Sabbath-breaking railway, "how can it be expected of me to be accountable for what my property does? If I am squeamish, others won't be; so the trains will run, whether or no."

"Oh dear!" sighed poor I to myself; "am I responsible for what my fishing-rod does? If I am squeamish, Nat and Bill will go and break the Sabbath, whether or no."

"Yes; but you are responsible for what you knowingly and willingly let your property do," exclaims conscience; "you certainly are. Your pro-

perty is a talent for you to use aright. It is an influence by which you show what your principles are, or whether you have any settled principles at all. You have no right, according to Bible principles, to let your premises for a gambling saloon, or to lend your money for nefarious trade, or to let your horses and carriages to Sabbath pleasure-parties, or to keep your shares in Sabbath-breaking corporations. 'I cannot control corporations,' you may say. No, you cannot, perhaps; but as far as your example and authority go, you can lift up your voice and example against Sabbath-breaking, by quitting them. If all men who respect the Sabbath were to stand up and do their duty in this respect, a healthy public opinion would be created, which would in the end stop Sabbath desecration altogether." But I am wandering from my subject.

There I stood alone—I and my property—the nice little fishing-rod on one side, and the world, with its dull, blunted moral perceptions, in the shape of my cousins Nat and Bill, on the other. I had decided against trouting, and in favour of Sabbath-keeping—I, my personal self; but my fishing-rod, should I let that go? All the varied emotions swung to and fro through my bosom much quicker than they could be written.

"Hugh! I say," again exclaimed Nat, "I say I want your fishing-rod. Go and get it, I say."

"I can't let you have my fishing-rod on the Sabbath-

day," at last I had courage to say. "You may have it whenever you wish on week-days."

It was out. My stand was taken. My principles were declared. Nor had I time to notice Nat's angry and astonished look, or to mind the awful curse which issued from his mouth, for my aunt at that moment screamed from the pantry window,—

"Well, Hugh, I suppose by your looks you want to go to meeting."

"Yes, ma'am; I never stay at home."

"Well, your uncle has got a little business to see to in the morning. He'll take the waggon, and we'll go. Bill, tell Jem to wash the waggon wheels."

Meanwhile I turned upon my heel and hied away to the wood-house chamber.

The church was nearly three miles off, up at "the Corner," as it was called. As the people were scattered far and wide, and often came from the distance of two, three, and four miles, they remained in and about the church during the intermission, which lasted not quite an hour. Sunday-schools had not then been established there. The Sabbath passed off more Sabbath-like than the morning promised, and by half-past three in the afternoon we reached home again. Home! But it did not seem much like home to me. On driving into the yard, we spied Bill and Nat coming in an opposite direction, after a seemingly successful day's operation.

"Hallo, mother!" shouted Nat, "we must have these trout for supper."

"Cooking, cooking!" complained my aunt; "I should think to-morrow morning might do as well."

The boys declared they should be cooked; trout they'd have for supper, anyhow. My uncle chimed in, "Cook 'em, cook 'em, and not make a fuss."

Jumping out of the waggon, I looked wistfully round for Jem, but he was nowhere to be seen. Left to myself, what a hungry desire did I feel for a book!

"Aunt," I asked, "are there no books here?" following her as she went to pick up some chips to kindle the fire.

"Books, child! you've asked me that question a dozen times. Books! what do you want with books?"

She was warm, and that, perhaps, made her fretful. I turned off through a side-door in the wood-house, and bent my way across the field to an old apple-tree, under which I sat down and wept. When the horn sounded for supper, I went into the house and took my seat at table, though with but little appetite for food. Two trout were lying on my plate.

"Hugh likes trout," said Bill, slyly.

"Hugh likes trout, if they are not caught on Sunday," I said to myself, eyeing the two fishes. After eating a slice of bread and butter, I laid down my

knife and leaned back in my chair. In fact, I had no heart to eat at all.

"Why don't you eat, child?" asked my aunt; "you must needs be hungry. Taste of the trout; they are good."

"*I* don't think he deserves any," exclaimed Nat, in anything but an under-tone.

"I don't know why he does not, I am sure," answered the mother.

"*I* do," said Nat, scowling at me.

"Hugh don't like Sunday trout; he's for having trout, fishing-tackle, and everything else keep the Sabbath, sing psalms, and do all such things," said Bill.

"And there he is in the right of it," replied my aunt, keeping on my side.

"What's all this talk about?" at last asked my uncle roughly, looking round on us boys.

"Hugh is setting himself up for law and gospel," exclaimed Nat.

"He won't eat a trout that is caught on Sunday," said Bill.

"How is that, Hugh?" asked my uncle.

"I am not hungry, sir."

"How is it about the trout, I say?" he asked in a testy tone. "What right have you, I should like to know, to set yourself up for law and gospel here, in this house?"

I looked up at him, surprised.

"How is it about the trout? Why don't you eat what is put on your plate?"

"I am not hungry, sir," I answered meekly.

"Not hungry? That's not the point!"

His nose began to look very red.

"What, I say, are you and the boys wrangling about?"

"I did not know we were wrangling, uncle."

"What does all this amount to?" asked my aunt, beginning to look disturbed, and casting an anxious glance towards her husband. In fact, Uncle Hugh of one time was not the Uncle Hugh of another. "If Hugh has finished his supper, that is enough."

"But I want an answer. What is it about the trouting, I say?" looking at me fiercely.

"Hugh would not let me have his fishing-rod to go trouting because it is Sunday," said Nat with a sneer.

"And he wouldn't go with us, because it is Sunday," added Bill.

"No, nor eat a trout, because they broke the Sabbath by being caught," shouted Nat, with a loud, boisterous laugh.

"Is that so?" asked Uncle Hugh, fixing his eyes on me. "Are you such a fellow as all that comes to? Is it so?"

I was afraid to answer.

"Hugh, I say, are you all that?"

At last I tremblingly answered, "Yes, sir; I am just what Nat and Bill have said. I was brought up to think so."

"Odds! bobs!" exclaimed my uncle excitedly, "I don't stand that from any boy. Get out of my sight," looking angrily at me, and raising his voice to a high key. "Odds! bobs! you set yourself up here for law and gospel!"

"Hush, hush," said my aunt. "What is all this noise about? Hugh has said or done no harm. He was asked his opinion, and he honestly gave it."

Meanwhile I left the table.

"Who does the boy set himself up to be?" said my uncle in an angry tone, as I went out into the pantry. "The lazy, snivelling dog! He has not earned the salt of his porridge since he's been here! My word for it, he'll never be anything! No use to anybody! The lazy, snivelling dog."

My uncle's morning business had not gone according to his mind. Indeed, everything seemed to have gone wrong with him since our return from meeting, until the dark clouds which had been gathering over his spirit burst upon my poor head with all their fury. As I afterwards learned, such storms were not infrequent; but this first one which I had witnessed chilled and frightened me. Straying out into the yard, the first object which caught my eye, sitting on

the large flat stone before the door, was Jem, who caught me by the hand, jerking it up and down with a knowing and approving nod.

"Pluck!" whispered Jem, in a low, emphatic tone. Then catching up the two huge milk-pails that stood beside him, he set off full speed to the cow-yard. I followed him.

"Oh! this ain't like my own home," I said pitifully, squatting down by Jem's side, as he sat milking old Whiteface. "I don't know what I shall do! I almost wish I were a trout, swimming beautifully about in some lonely little brook. Uncle is dreadfully angry with me."

"Supposing you was a trout, maybe Ned might catch you. So you see every stick has its crook. There's never any use in wishing. You've got to take things as they come, bitter or sweet," said Jem, milking with all his might.

Jem's suggestion cured me of ever wishing to be a trout. "But uncle's dreadfully angry with me," I added; "and I do not know exactly what for either, nor how he came to be so."

"He has such spells," whispered Jem. "It is a bad spirit. He most commonly keeps it corked up, but once in a while he lets it fly, and then, says I, there's a storm for somebody. It will leave him to-night, and he'll be Uncle Hugh again to-morrow."

I looked inquiringly at him. What did he mean?

He said no more, but went on milking. "They are all angry with me, Bill and Nat too. My aunt is not. But, Jem," I said, "I really could not do otherwise; it is just as mother would like me to do." And the thought of my mother's kind and gentle face was like to break my heart. "Oh!" I sighed, "what am I to come to? and what will become of me, Jem?"

"Don't feel bad," said Jem, turning round and smiling on me, "don't feel bad, Hugh. You'll come out well enough if you keep on as you've begun, honouring your parents and obeying God. God himself will take care of you. Only have pluck, Hugh, only have pluck, and all will be well. Only think of Daniel! He wasn't going to mind the decree, and give up his praying to God, in the way he had been brought up. No, he said he wouldn't. So he was put into the lions' den. Did the lions eat him up? No, indeed! God took care of Daniel, because he minded him rather than the king. Daniel walked straight in among the lions. He was not afraid. No, Hugh, he had pluck! That's it, Hugh! Stand up like a man, and hold to your principles till you see they are wrong."

Jem's words comforted me very much; so I said, "You've been to meeting to-day, Jem, I know."

"Yes," answered Jem; "I always endeavour to go; but I don't go to that great white meeting-house at

the Corner. Our meetings are held in a little brick school-house, off by Pilot Mountain."

How I wanted to go to his meeting—Jem's meeting, in a little brick school-house by Pilot Mountain.

"Mayn't I? mayn't I go with you to your meeting, Jem?" I asked earnestly; for I seemed to feel that his meeting must be like my mother's meeting, Jem talked so much like her.

"That's as the folk say," answered Jem. "Maybe they'll let you, sometimes."

Here was a bright spot.

The first thing I did the next morning was to get out my fishing-rod.

"What's that for?" asked Jem, who was churning.

"Going to offer it to Nat."

"Do you think Nat deserves it, when he tried to make a difficulty?" asked Jem.

Oh dear! I lay thinking of that very thing in the night. I did not feel inclined to offer it to him, but my mother used to say, "Show yourself a friend, if people are ever so unfriendly." It was not because I did not want to lend my rod, but I did not want it to be used on Sunday; so, as I wanted Nat to understand how it was, I thought I ought to offer it to him on Monday.

I saw Nat by the well, and hurried down to him, rod in hand. "Here's my rod," I said, timidly hold-

ing it out to him. "I'd just as soon you should have it as not."

What did Nat do but snatch it from my hand, and throw it with violence across the yard!

"I don't want your old fishing-rod!" he exclaimed angrily.

Such was the state of affairs in my Uncle Hugh's family.



CHAPTER III.

GOING TO SCHOOL.



DURING the summer, all the boys whose labour was worth anything on the farm were kept at home, so I did not go to school until winter. When the winter school began, I attended also. The school-house was quite two miles from my uncle's, over by Pilot Mountain—the very same little brick school-house where Jem went to meeting. It was a very pleasant walk in summer, but a very bleak and cold one in winter. I was thankful to go to school again. My books looked very precious to me, and I took to my studies with the best appetite in the world. The master, a young man from college, was kind-hearted and intelligent. He loved the boys, and the boys loved him. There is no lack of real desire to improve, nor of earnest, thorough study, in a country winter school. Opportunities for improvement are few and far between. The older youths having the opportunity

to attend school not more than three or four months in a year, those months are diligently improved while they last.

The class in which I was placed was composed of nearly twenty boys and girls, most of them older than myself. The class, as a class, made a very poor figure in grammar and spelling, which determined the master to offer a prize of a silver pencil-case to the one who made the greatest improvement in those two branches. As he held up the silver pencil-case, oh, how it glistened! A beautiful new silver pencil-case to be our own! Now, grammar had never been one of my favourite studies. Indeed, I used to wish I were a king, just to make a bonfire of all the grammars in the world. I wished the pencil-case could be given to the best arithmetic scholar, or the best in geography, or something more interesting than grammar; but grammar and spelling were the branches for which the prize was to be given, so there was nothing for us to do but to study. The worst of it, with me, was, I had not the book which the other boys had.

One morning, towards the end of December, Jem said he guessed there would be no school that day, at least for me. The fine snow was already falling, and every now and then a gust of wind whirled it in eddies through the air. I always got up with Jem, whose first duty was to make a roaring fire in the great kitchen fire-place. By the light of it, I

used sometimes to get an hour's study before daylight.

My uncle was then from home. After breakfast, the boys, Nat and Bill, concluded it was of no use to go into the woods that day. On pleasant winter days, the men all went to the forest to cut down and chop up wood. They meant to keep snug by the fire that day, they said, and play checkers, or fox and geese. I put on my greatcoat, rather tight and short for me, for it was its third winter, and I had, of late, begun to grow very fast.

"Hugh, I think you had better not go to school to-day," said my aunt; "the wind howls dreadfully, and it's a long way there."

"The master wanted us never to miss, and he's going to explain all about verbs to-day," I said. "I was afraid, once, I should never understand about active-transitive and active-intransitive verbs; but now I am determined to try. Besides, I haven't the book they study in. I learn out of Joe Price's."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Bill, who was preparing some corn to parch. "What good will it ever do? I'd never bother my head with it, and I used to tell the master so."

"It helps us to speak and write properly," I answered.

"I wonder how much wiser Hugh will ever be for it?" added Nat.

"It will do me good to try, though—won't it? Mother used to say there is as much in trying to overcome difficulties, as there is in actually getting the thing we aim at."

"Oh, your ears!" said my aunt; "you must tie them up, or they'll freeze;" and she pulled an old silk pocket-handkerchief out of her pocket, which she put over my head and tied under the chin.

"He ain't warm enough yet," said Jem, who just then came in with an armful of wood. "It is nipping cold. It is my advice to Hugh not to go to school to-day."

"But, Jem, to-day's the day the master's going to explain something; and if he can go there and explain, I'm sure the boys ought to go and hear."

My aunt just then thought of a blue frock, which Bill had outgrown while it was yet as good as new, and this she went to get.

"That's it!" said Jem—"that's it!" So over my plaid coat, shrunk on all sides, she threw the coarse blue frock, which came over my knees and fell loosely over the body. Thus armed and equipped, I set forth for my two miles' walk.

"Better stay at home and snap corn with us," said Bill, as I went out at the door.

"I wish most heartily he would!" added my aunt. Jem went out of the gate with me, and followed me with his eyes until I made the turn towards Pilot

Mountain. What a bluster met me at the turn! The north wind hurled troops of snow-flakes right into my eyes, nose, and mouth, and for a few moments I was almost blinded. "Oh!" I cried, bending to the blast; "but General Washington's soldiers had a worse time than this: they had not warm clothes on;" and my heart kept warm with thankfulness for the blue frock and silk kerchief. "I've got nothing but the wind and snow to fight with; they had an enemy—a real enemy. Wind and snow are not enemies—not real enemies;" although just at that moment I could not see clearly that they were real friends. On I went, until I came to a group of trees, which partially sheltered me from the driving blast. Here I stopped to take breath. No living thing was in sight; no boy, no man, no sleigh. At other times, this was a much travelled road; now, the snow was fast drifting into heaps. The pine-trees cracked and groaned under the storm, and everything wore a wild and dreary look.

"If I only had Joe Price's book at home, I don't believe I should have come," I began to say, my face smarting with the cold. I almost dreaded to emerge from the shelter of the woods. Whenever we were disposed to find fault, be discontented, or grow faint-hearted, my mother used to incite us by contrasting our situation with that of those who were worse off than ourselves. "Well," I now remember saying

to myself, "this ain't so bad as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace. God took care of them, and he will take care of me. It isn't so bad as Napoleon going over the Alps, when the avalanche came tumbling down the mountain side, burying his men. 'Tis not so bad as being at sea and the ship going to pieces!" And, with these examples, I summoned up my flagging courage and went on my way. It was tough enough.

"If I had only had Joe Price's book, I don't believe I should have come. Oh dear! but I have not Joe Price's book, nor any book that they learn the parsing and spelling lessons in! Uncle Hugh might get me one. Oh dear!" And with this I sank down behind the stone wall to take breath. I thought of my mother. She was in the cold ground, and I almost wished myself by her side. How lonely and desolate I felt! How cold and frowning was everything!

At last the brick school-house appeared in sight. I straightened up and began to run; but my hands were too much benumbed to hold up my blue frock, and down I tumbled into a drift. "It is not an avalanche," I said, scrambling up and making my way as fast as I could, until I reached the school-house door. How glad was I at the sight of it! I seized the latch. It was fastened, and the snow was drifting against it. "Oh, mercy!" I cried; and well

might I have cried for mercy, for my strength and warmth were now completely exhausted. The school-house locked and empty! The storm was now getting into my soul, when the door was opened from within, and the round, warm face of Joe Price himself peeped out.

"It's Hugh!" he cried in a friendly tone—"Hugh Fisher; and he can but just get out of the drift. We locked the door because the wind forced it open. Oh! Hugh is as cold as he can be."

The master soon appeared. "My poor boy!" he said, drawing me in and helping off my outside gear. I could scarcely move or speak. But the fire sparkled, and the flames swept up the broad chimney. The master spoke kind and comforting words to me. The scholars all looked glad to see me. Oh, how nice, how delightful did that school-room seem to me! The storm without appeared to die away as the pleasant warmth stole through my limbs. It came from friendly faces as well as from the friendly fire.

The school was quite small in numbers; instead of fifty, there were twenty-one, and these mostly from the neighbouring farms. Of our own class there were nine. The master soon gave us an interval for play; so I found my walk had consumed far more time than usual. After the boys had collected round me, and then dispersed out of doors for a frolic among the drifts, he came and sat down beside me.

I still kept the first chair I sank into on reaching the room. "Well, Hugh," said the master, "there is no boy here who has come so far as you have done. You are a courageous fellow! What made you venture so, in a day like this; eh?"

"O sir," I answered, "I did not want to miss hearing about the verbs. Then, it is not as though I had a book of my own to study the parsing lessons out of at home. I haven't got a book: I told Uncle Hugh. I study out of Joe Price's book; he lets me. I have to study when I get the best chance, you see."

"What did your uncle Hugh say when you asked him?"

"He said, 'Odds bobs: I might take Nat's and Bill's books, or go without.' They have not got this book; so I do the best I can."

I shall never forget the very tender look which the master bestowed upon me.

"And you are an orphan?" he said.

"Yes, sir," I answered. "I suppose I have got to make my way in the world alone. I always wanted to get an education. My father and mother both meant me to have one, but—"

"But what, Hugh?" asked the master.

"Things are so altered now, sir!" I suppose I said it mournfully, for the thought of it always made me sad, in spite of myself. "Uncle Hugh thinks it is

worse than folly to get an education. He never will listen to a word of it, I suspect; but I am willing to work for it, or shift almost any way."

"Well, my boy," said the master, patting me on the head, as he rose to call the school to order—"well, Hugh, where there's a will, there's a way."

We had a very pleasant school that day. Joe Price and I studied together. The master made everything about transitive verbs as clear as day; and new light was thrown upon my mind about decimal fractions. There were fewer of us there; and when the class went to recite, there was time to ask the master a great many more questions. Ever after that, I understood decimal fractions and transitive verbs. Oh, it was so pleasant to study! I did not mind that dreadful walk. It cost much less than it was worth. I learned a great deal that stormy day. Then, somehow or other, the friendly feelings of the boys did me good. Uncle Hugh's family were not a very kindly-spoken family, although, perhaps, they were quite willing to do for each other when worse came to worst. They were very different from my father's family.

But the day wore away, and fast enough too; and as the early shades came on in the afternoon, I began to think what a tough job it would be to get home again. After school was dismissed, and the boys were scrambling for tippets, caps, and coats, and

Joe Price was urging me to go to his house, which I never thought for a moment I should do, the master came up, and laying his hand on my shoulder, said: "Hugh, you must come home with me to-night. I cannot think of letting you go home such a tempestuous night as this; you would, in all probability, lose your way and perish—it is very much drifted." Could I? should I? I was sure I should like to do so.

"Will they not scold at me for not returning?"

"I'll see to that," said the master. "No, they shall not scold at you."

So I was going home with the master. As we all walked out together into the still stormy air, how thankful I was that the long, lonely walk to Uncle Hugh's was not before me! Joe Price and I kept a little while together; then he stopped, and I went on to the next house, where the master boarded. He took me into the kitchen, where the family were—Mr. Drew and Mrs. Drew, and two or three daughters, and a married son and his wife and the baby. He told them I was Hugh Fisher, and how I braved the storm and came to school; and how, when I had reached the school-house, I sank, almost exhausted, into a snow-drift by the door. And then Mrs. Drew took me by the hand, and said she was very glad the master had brought me to their house; and placed a little green chair by the fire, for me to sit down in

and warm my feet. Dear Mrs. Drew! she seemed to speak like my mother. Then Mr. Drew said: "Ah, yes, I remember this little fellow's father. He was as brave as a lion. He's just like him—got the turn of his eye. Well, Hugh, I hope you'll be as good a man as your father. Your father, when he was a boy, was one of the best boys anywhere about."

Oh what good words were those! Nobody here had ever spoken so of my father before. Uncle Hugh and Aunt had spoken of him, but in such a way that I would rather they had not spoken.

I could not help drawing my chair close by Mr. Drew, and asking him to tell me more about my father.

After a good supper, on which we sought God's blessing, the great family Bible was laid upon the table before Mr. Drew, who put it before the master to read. The master read a chapter, a hymn was sung, and then we all kneeled down, and good Mr. Drew engaged in prayer. How he thanked God for his mercies, and how he prayed for any poor wanderers who might be out on a night like this! I could not help being afraid somebody was in those pine-woods that were groaning and creaking in the storm. When we were seated, Miss Clara Drew came and said in a low voice, "My dear, is anything the matter with you? Do you feel quite well?"

Until that moment I was scarcely conscious of the

tears on my cheeks. "Oh," I answered, trying to suppress a sob—"oh no; I am very well—only it seems so much like home here!"

This was the first time I had seen family worship since my mother's death. It was like a soft south wind to my soul.

Then Mr. Drew asked me to come and sit by him; and he talked to me a good while about my father. He also asked all about our family—my mother, Henry, and Agnes. It was so pleasant to talk about them and not feel afraid.

I do not know what time in the evening it was, when Cato, the watch-dog in the wood-house, set up a terrible barking.

"Somebody's coming," said Mr. Drew, starting and looking round. "Joshua, had you not better go and see what is the matter?"

Joshua was his married son. He put his book quickly down, and was going to the door, when a thundering knock was heard.

"Somebody in distress, I fear, poor creature!" said Mrs. Drew, following her son, who opened the door.

"Where's the master? I want to see the master!" said a voice whose tones were anxious, though it was a man's voice, and one that sounded very familiar to me. The master heard himself called, and hurried out.

"Do you know anything of Hugh Fisher?" exclaimed the voice. "The fellow's pluck could not carry him through a night like this."

All of us who remained in the kitchen were silent, listening to the talk in the entry. "It's Jem!" I cried, jumping up, "it's Jem!" and I ran also to the door. "Here I am, Jem!" I shouted, putting my head out by the master's.

"There you are!" exclaimed Jem, "alive and well too!" Jem looked like the storm-king himself. He was on horseback, a buffalo-skin tied round his body, and his seal-skin cap drawn all over his ears. His horse was prancing and panting, kicking the drift that was driving against the door in every direction; while the flakes and the wind swept round Jem, whirling and eddying in the wildest manner possible.

"Come in, come in!" called out Mrs. Drew from the kitchen.

"No, thank ye." answered Jem.—"Well, Hugh, you're alive and well! When you didn't come, and I went a long piece hallooing to meet you and help you along, and when your aunt began to be fidgety, the boys said they guessed you had got snug quarters somewhere; 'But we can't be sure of that,' says I. 'I can't go to bed and not know but Hugh is in a snow-bank. I can't go to sleep nohow.' So I got neighbour Colt's horse, and took the dogs, and we kept up a hallooing all along, as maybe you might be

by the way, behind the stone wall, or lost among the pines. I could not hear of you anywhere, so I came to the schoolmaster to find out about you. Now, Hugh, are you going to get on behind me, and go home?"

"No, no!" exclaimed Mr. Joshua Drew. "A thousand thanks to you, Jem. God bless you, but the fellow is in snug quarters; he'd better not think of leaving us in such a night as this."

"Oh no," echoed the master. "Hugh is going to stay with me to-night."

"Do, Jem, come in and warm yourself," said Mrs. Drew. "Do."

"No, thank ye," answered Jem. "I shall go home somewhat lighter than I came. Hugh is safe." He turned his horse's head, called the dogs, and Jem was soon out of sight. We all ran shivering back to the kitchen.

"That Jem is one of the best-hearted fellows in the world," said old Mr. Drew.

"Yes, sir; Jem is like our folk, as it used to be at home," I responded eagerly, that being my highest standard for judging the good principles and friendly warmth of people. "I don't know what I should do if it weren't for Jem. He talks with me, and lets me talk to him." And for a moment I was almost sorry I did not pay Jem for his trouble and kindness by getting up behind him and going home.

"Ought I?" I asked the master, "ought I not to have kept him company home, when he was so good as to come after me?"

"Oh no," answered the master; "he's very thankful you are anchored in such a safe harbour."

After a pleasant chat among the elders, by whom I sat and listened, the master asked me to go to his room with him. How cheerful it looked! There was a bright fire, a large round stand full of books, with pens, ink, and paper, his comfortable bed in one corner; but the books!—it did my eyes good to see some books again.

"Oh!" I exclaimed delightedly, "it seems like home!—those books!" And I stood gazing at the table with wonder and gladness.

"Sit down and look over them," said the master. "Here is the Reader, which your class parse and spell from. Though I am glad Joe Price is so friendly as to let you study in his, it is better you should have one, and I'll lend you this, Hugh; you'll be careful of it, I know."

"Yes, indeed, sir." Then I ventured to tell him again how I wanted to get an education; how my father and mother both meant I should have one; how I liked to study, and how eager I felt sometimes after a book; how, also, Uncle Hugh had a very mean opinion of books and education, and such things. This matter of getting an education had

begun to look very dark; how was I, then, encouraged by the master saying that, in this country, it was not a very difficult thing to gain a good education, provided one had a real mind to it, and was ready to work for it. If that was all that was wanted, the matter certainly looked brighter. As the master led me to speak of myself and my father, I told him father thought that young boys had better learn thoroughly the Latin grammar, and before his death I had begun it; that after his death I had had no teacher, but I wished now I could take it up again.

"Do you think you should like it?" asked the master. "It is hard and dry."

"I know it is, and I never liked grammar at all; but father said it must be grappled with, if one meant to be thoroughly educated, and the sooner the better; so, if it has got to be done, I had as well do it now as any time."

The master looked at me, and said that was all true; and if I really had a strong mind to study Latin grammar, and thought I could persevere in it, he would lend me one, and I might recite to him.

I hardly knew what to say. All I did say was, "Oh, it seems like home!" After a pause, I added, "I have learned to-morrow's lessons in Joe Price's book. Mayn't I begin my Latin to-night?" Then the master set me a lesson, and he began to study: so did I.

The lesson was not learned before I grew sleepy, and began to nod over my book. I rubbed my eyes and pinched myself to keep awake; for I felt very much ashamed of being sleepy when I had the privilege of studying with the master. Sleepy I could not help being, in spite of all my trying not to be, and at last I fell fast asleep with my head on the open leaf of the Latin grammar. The master came and laid his hand on my shoulder. "Oh, sir!" said I, as I started up, "I did not mean to do so."

"It is quite late in the evening, and you had better go to bed now, Hugh," said the master. "You can sleep on the further side of the bed. Warm your feet first." The master betook himself to his book again, and I to warming my feet.

And now the old question was once more revived, "Shall I kneel down and pray—he a good and learned man, and the master too, and I nothing but a little boy?"

This question had once been thoroughly settled in the wood-house chamber many months before; it now came up, but without any distracting doubts or fears. To be sure, I felt some embarrassment about it, because he was the master; but I had no mind, even for a moment, of giving up my prayer. Perhaps I lingered a little longer near the fire on account of his presence, but at last I went, as was my custom, and kneeled down by the bedside. I was sure I had a

great deal to thank God for; and it made me very humble and tender-hearted to think what friends God had raised up for a poor orphan boy; and how thankful I ought to be for a part of the master's nice bed, when I might have got lost among the pines. The gusts howled down the chimney, and I shivered to think of it. Then undressing and creeping into bed, I popped my head out from the pillow, and cast a glance round the room.

There sat the master before the fire, and the flames danced on the walls; there was the round stand, full of books—big ones and little ones; and the bed felt so good. It was not a bit like the wood-house chamber at Uncle Hugh's, where the snow kept driving in through the cracks. Oh, it seemed like home!

Then the master's kind words about getting an education; then the Reader he lent me, so that Joe Price need not be annoyed any more; then the Latin lessons—oh, it seemed like home! And you may well suppose Hugh Fisher fell asleep more peacefully and delightedly than on any night since his mother's death; and if he dreamed at all, he had pleasant dreams then.

Upon the whole, his perseverance, or "pluck," as Jem called it, turned out pretty well, though he was almost ready to give up when among the pines; and I believe it is almost always so, that perseverance in

a good cause secures its own reward. When good people or good causes fail, it is because somebody gets discouraged and gives up. Why did not the Israelites, led on by Moses and Aaron, go directly up and enter the promised land? Because the spies were frightened, and discouraged the people. God was willing enough, but they gave up, and then were left to wander forty long years in the wilderness.

The next morning the clouds had all gone; the sky was of a clear, deep blue; the sun shone beautifully upon the drifts and fields of pure snow.

"The drifts were hanging by the sill,
The eaves, the door;
The hay-stack had become a hill,
All covered o'er.
E'en the old posts that held the bars,
And the old gate,
Forgetful of their wintry wars
And age sedate,
High-capped and plumed, like white hussars,
Stood there in state!"

Perhaps there are some boys who might inquire, "Well, I wonder who got the prize—the silver pencil-case which the master offered to the parsing and spelling class? Hugh Fisher, I daresay."

No, Hugh Fisher did not get it; his friend, Joe Price, won the pencil-case; and Hugh was very glad that he did. There were some who grumbled and declared the master was partial, but almost the whole school considered with him that Joe Price deserved it, if anybody did.

CHAPTER IV.

LION ACADEMY.

THE lapse of two years brought several changes into my uncle's family. Uncle Hugh himself seemed dying by a premature decay. Another person had been added to our family —Alexander Dale, a boy about my own age, and a nephew to my aunt. Dale was a greater favourite with his cousins than I had ever been, and I soon found that my staying was not much desired by some members of the family. My aunt was always kind; and, though the temper of my uncle had become softened by sickness and age, the boys ruled the house, and it was plainly to be seen they meant to rule me out of it.

Nor was I sorry. I only wanted the liberty of trying to do for myself; but, as my uncle had sheltered me when I stood in need of a home, I hesitated about leaving him just when my labour upon the farm had become valuable. A conversation, which

I happened to overhear, between Nat and his father (which it is not needful to relate), determined me upon opening the subject to my uncle. I took the first opportunity of doing so, and he received it kindly.

"Well, Hugh, and what do you mean to do?"

I almost shrank from annoying his feelings by answering that I meant to try to do what my parents always meant me to do—get an education, and afterwards I should decide upon my further course. I did say so, however. He faintly smiled, and said,—

"The old subject again! Well, you hold on to it as a hawk does to a chicken. I've no objection. Do as you like. Young folk have their way now more than they used to. Have you got any plan afoot, Hugh? You know I can't do much for you, Hugh."

I told him I did not expect anything of him, and I thanked him for all he had done for me during the last two years. Tears came into the old man's eyes. I then unfolded to him a little plan which the story will unfold to you. He nodded his head.

"Well, it's all uncertainty, but I make no doubt you'll get along. There's considerable stuff about you, Hugh, when you set out."

The interview ended far better than I expected.

During the next week there was to be a great review. When the day arrived, some of the neighbours' boys, with my cousins and Jem and myself, set

off at an early hour for the training-field, which was about three miles distant. There was enough to see —the tents, the booths, the tables, the soldiers—the coming in of waggons and carriages—the passing to and fro of men, boys, children, and women not a few. To quiet people, as we were, there was not much of interest; though, alas! on the training-fields of old times there was much to regret and avoid. My companions soon found others, and with them they went off, while I (more intent upon the main object which I had in view) soon left the field and took the road to L——, lying distant between two and three miles. On the road were many coming to the show.

"Wrong way," said one and another as I walked on. "You're going the wrong way."

"Right!" was my answer—"all right!"

I found myself at last entering the main street of L——, with pretty white houses on either side; lilac-trees, poplars, and elms, with here and there a maple, overshadowing the way; while neat grass-plats, bordered with flowers, gave a tasteful air to the dwellings. The academy soon came in sight—"The Lion Academy," as it was labelled, in large gilt letters. There was no mistake. I stopped before it with a kind of pride, and I felt like making a low bow to it. I saw the play-ground, and the beaten paths of the scholars. Turning round for a stopping-place in order to rest, I saw a pump in the yard. I

went in, sat down on the trough, drank from the spout, bathed my feet, and taking down my shoes, which had been slung on my back during the journey, put them on, preparatory to going to find myself a place. Four biscuits were in my pocket, two of which served to satisfy my craving appetite. The nearly six miles had tired me; and my spirits, now that I was actually on the spot, were not so elevated as when I set out.

"What can I do?" said I, as a thought of my forlorn condition came despondingly over me.

"You do! what can you not do if you try?" said a voice in answer. "You are not going to give up your education just at the outset, are you?"

"No, I am not!" I said to myself, starting up. "An education I must and will have, at all events, if God will let me." Coming out of the yard, I looked long and wistfully up and down the street. Pretty white houses enough there were, but scarcely a person to be seen. "Well, I'll dash into it," I said. "I'll go opposite,—it would be convenient to live so near school." So to the house opposite I directed my steps, and knocked at the green side-door. An old man, leaning upon a stout staff, answered to the call.

"Do you want an errand-boy?" said I.

"What?" cried the old man.

I stated the case, adding that I wanted a place

where I could work for my board and go to the academy. The old man looked hard at me, as if he but half comprehended the import of my speech. I began again.

"No," said he, "no, we've got nothing for you,—nothing for such folks,—better go to work!" and he slammed the door in my face.

"Nothing for such people!" I muttered; but he could not hear, and with that my sudden gust of resentment vanished.

Another two-story house was attempted. I knocked, and was answered by a young girl, to whom my wants were made known. "No," answered she with a pleasant smile, "we don't need anybody; but I think you may find a place at the third house down from the academy—there!" pointing with her finger. "Mr. Sawyer lives there, and he's been wanting a boy."

I am sure my looks as well as my lips expressed my thanks. Her manner was so very kind. Away I trudged. Mr. Sawyer, alas! had just engaged a boy. Bending my steps to the inn, the piazza of which was now deserted by its usual loungers, having all gone off to the training-field, I sat down to think, fixing my eyes on the academy. "Only three times! It is worth trying for three times three, and three times that," I said stoutly to myself. In a few more moments, I was fast asleep on the door-step.

It was a refreshing nap; for when the arrival of the mail-coach wheeling up before the door aroused me, I sprang up as bright as in the early morning. The coach door opened. "Colonel, you stop here," said the driver; when a smart-looking gentleman, and a spruce boy of about my own age, jumped out. His trunks were taken off, and placed on the piazza.

"He is going to the academy, maybe," thought I. The boy marched to and fro, with his shining boots, and glazed cap, and large black bow fastened to his collar. At last he said, "That's the academy, I suppose?"

"Yes," I answered, as there was nobody else near to whom the question could have been addressed. "Are you going to it?"

"I suppose so, though I have no great liking to academies, or books, or any such things."

"Oh," thought I, "change places! Do change places with me!"

"Lovell!" cried his father, coming to the door and looking around. "Come! where are you? We must go directly and see the preceptor, because I want to leave when the next coach comes along."

The father and son walked off.

"That's Colonel Laws," whispered the hostler to me; "the greatest man hereabouts. He's as rich as a Jew, and has been to the Legislature I don't know how often."

That's Colonel Laws! Oh, yes; Colonel Laws was the man of that region; and that was Lovell Laws, his son. I almost envied him, as my eyes followed their retreating figures. "And me—and me!—no father to care for me so!"

"I wonder if I shall ever know anything more of Lovell Laws. Never, unless I get along better than I have done;" and with that I bristled up and went down the steps of the piazza.

"Here! Where are you bound for? You don't belong hereabouts, do you?" asked the hostler.

I told him what I wanted—to work for my board, and to attend the academy.

"Indeed!" cried the hostler, "we want just such a boy. Mr. Otis, that keeps this inn, was asking about a boy just yesterday. I don't know how it will be about the going-to-school part. He's gone into the training-field, but he'll be home to dinner."

"But the going-to-school part is just the part I want to accomplish," said I. "I am trying to get into the academy."

"Well, never mind. Stop here till the master comes, for he's the only person I know of who wants a boy;" and so, upon the whole, I concluded to apply to the master of the inn.

After a while, Colonel Laws and his son came back.

"Hostler," said the colonel, "here; I want my son's trunk carried over to the preceptor's." The

hostler seemed to be the only person about, every one else having gone to the training-field.

"Yes, sir." Then turning to me, he asked if I would not like the job of wheeling it over. Yes; I was always glad of something to do. He brought me the wheelbarrow, and helped me on with the trunk, and told me where to go; and thus I earned a shilling, dropped into my hand by Colonel Laws himself. "This will help me to buy a book," I thought.

In due time, Mr. Otis came home. He concluded to take me for three months, to earn my board by work out of school hours. That matter was then settled. Now I thought I would go to the preceptor, and see about getting admitted.

He was just coming out of his gate. I stopped before him, my heart beating. It was a moment or two before I could speak.

"I want to attend the Lion Academy," I said.

"Very well," answered the preceptor; "it is not yet full. We can allow a few more admissions."

"What are the terms, sir?"

"Four dollars a quarter."

"Is there not some work to be done for the academy—sweeping, laying fires, and dressing paths? I should be glad to get a little such work to do to pay for my quarter, as I have to get my education on my own means."

The preceptor looked earnestly at me, asking me where I came from, and where I was staying. I told him how I had been so fortunate as to get a place.

"Have you no friends to lend you a helping hand?" asked he.

"My father and mother are both dead," I replied. "I have nobody to help me, unless Jem does, who has been working where I have been—and he works out."

The preceptor then told me I might commence school, with the rest, the day after to-morrow, and he would see what I could do.

The next matter then was settled; and now I must go back to the training-field, and get a chance from there to ride home if I could.

"You'll be here the day after to-morrow, then?" said Mr. Otis.

"Yes, sir," answered I, and began my homeward march.

On reaching the training-field, the first person I saw was Jem, who, I believe, was on the look-out for me. I told him all that had happened. His broad mouth was extended, as nearly as it could be, from ear to ear.

"Pluck!" cried Jem. It was Jem who told me ut Lion Academy, and he also offered to help me way he could. "I'll lend you what money I

can," whispered he, grasping my hand. "You deserve to get along."

Uncle Hugh listened with much interest to my day's adventures, occasionally interrupting me—"Colonel Laws; ay, I know him!" "Mr. Otis; ay, I've traded with him!"

When I took my leave of him, the second morning after, he slipped a silver crown into my hand. "Don't say anything about it, Hugh; I wish I had more. You've been a good boy—a very good boy. God bless you, Hugh!" And the sick old man rubbed his coarse shirt-sleeve across his eyes.

A pedlar, with a green waggon, spent the night at the neighbouring farm-house; and Jem agreed with him to take me over to the town of L——, which happened to be the next place whither the pedlar was going.

Thursday forenoon, at eleven o'clock, I took my seat, with about fifty other lads, in the large school-room of the Lion Academy.

CHAPTER V.

PERPLEXITIES.

MY situation at Mr. Otis's afforded me ample employment out of school; and much of the work was of a nature that injured and wore out my clothes. In fact I had but two decent suits, both much the worse for wear, and both every month growing more and more unsuited to my increasing size. My aunt gave me a new blue frock to wear over my clothes, which greatly helped to save them. Mrs. Otis was a very kind landlady; she took a motherly interest in me, and promised, of her own accord, as soon as she had time, to have a tailoress to make over some second-hand clothes, left a long time before by a lodger, for my best suit. The master was very particular about having his work done just at the time it was wanted; for which nobody could blame him.

As for books, I managed much better than I ex-

pected. The preceptor let the boys have books by paying so much a term for the use of them; and this greatly helped out the small sum which my purse contained, and which, in fact, was my all—only Jem stood ready with his "shiners," as he called them, in case of any emergency. I soon found there was a scholar who took care of the building, so that my tuition was still unprovided for. On again speaking to the preceptor about it, he said I need not give myself any trouble for the first half-term, after that he would talk with me about it. So, as I had plenty to do without nursing any unnecessary cares, I concluded to work while it was called to-day, and let to-morrow take care of itself. Thus everything went on finely for more than two weeks, when the bar-keeper went away, and I was called to more duty in-doors, especially in the bar-room. Before this, I had neither known nor thought much about this part of Mr. Otis's establishment, my attention having been completely occupied with what was given me to do in other parts of the house.

Drinking was my abhorrence even then, before any of the extensive and direct movements in behalf of temperance began to be greatly agitated. Mother took a great interest in the early discussion of the question; and in her frequent evening conversations with Henry and me, she planted in our hearts and consciences the seeds of strict and entire abstinence

from intoxicating drinks. In looking back to our earliest home education, three things strike me forcibly :—

1st. The clear apprehension we had of moral truth, and of its consequent obligations and duties, from the fact that we saw it free from all the twisting and quibbles with which self-interested, selfish, and timid men reason and act upon it.

2nd. The importance of making children see the grounds of moral obligation and personal responsibility, while they are children.

3rd. The indelibleness of early moral impressions. The character of the future man and woman is generally fixed before ten years have passed—I mean in kind if not in degree. Not but that the grace of God may convert a very bad man into a very good man; but the regenerated heart will still be subject to the craving appetites, the lingering lusts, the grovelling desires, the cowardly fears of his weak moral nature and shattered physical system.

Though in and about the bar-room, it was some time before I was called to do anything repugnant to my principles. It was now late in the autumn. My clothes were none of the warmest, so that a snug seat by the bright bar-room fire, and the use of the bright bar-room lamps to learn my lessons by (for, in the early part of the evening, few, if any, people came in), were certainly important considerations for me.

For advantages like these, I could endure the gin and tobacco fumes, which sometimes made me sick and dizzy.

The swearing, which I occasionally heard, was worse than all. But Mr. Otis himself did not allow much of it, especially from any common sort of person; so that, I suppose, I heard fewer oaths than are commonly uttered in a bar-room.

Mrs. Otis did not forget her promise about the clothes. At the close of the fourth week, she said,—

"Well, Hugh, the tailor is coming to-morrow, so hold yourself in readiness to be measured. I have been examining those clothes, and they will do grandly for you."

In two days more I was in full possession of a warm suit, which was doubly acceptable, as I had no greatcoat. The suit was more than was bargained for also. It was the free gift of Mrs. Otis, who was very kind and motherly, though she was not at all like my mother. But I am sure, as she turned me round to see how they fitted, she seemed as pleased as she well could be.

"There, Hugh, you deserve it, I think. You are more faithful than any boy we've had for many a day."

For this and other favours shown me I felt very thankful, for I had not been accustomed to receive favours.

It was on one Wednesday morning, that Mr. Otis

was going away on some business, and he wanted me to go to the preceptor and get leave of absence from school; which I did. After giving several directions, just as he was leaving, he said,—

"And you, Hugh, you stand ready to tend the bar, when Nancy can't go in."

Nancy was a stout girl—his niece -trusty and industrious, in whom they placed great confidence; and who, as they had no children, would become heiress to their property. When Mr. Otis was out, since the bar-keeper's departure, Nancy presided over the decanters.

"It is just what I was afraid might be," I said to myself, as the master's injunctions fell painfully on my ear. "And is it come to this—that I'm a rum-seller?" In fact, whenever I had time to forebode, this thing had come across me, ever since my duties lay so much more in the bar-room. Then I considered that the master would not dare to trust a boy to be handling such things, and that quieted me. But now my fears were actually realized. My courage sank below zero. Mr. Otis had put me to the bar. What could I—what should I do?

Mrs. Otis presently called me to pick over some barrels of apples. How cheerfully I ran to do it! Anything to take me from the bar-room. The forenoon passed away, and there was no call for my services—my dreaded services.

It was late in the afternoon—a chilly, dark, lowering November afternoon—I sat by the fire with one of my school-books, when Lovell Laws came in.

"Where are you to-day, Hugh?" asked Lovell. "Truant, eh? Our class does miserably without you."

I told him the reason.

"I wish I could board here," said Lovell; "sitting here and seeing people, as you do; joking with the men too. I always go to our tavern. It is just by father's. But the preceptor won't let the boys come here. He's awfully strict. I don't see what harm it will do."

"If anybody likes the smell of whisky and tobacco smoke, and the noise of quarrelling and swearing, there's plenty of all these here," I said. "For my part, I hate them all."

"Brandy smells good, I think," said Lovell; "and the sugar at the bottom of a glass of brandy-toddy tastes good; and cigars—why, cigars are very pleasant. I mean to smoke just as soon as I can. I do now, sometimes, slyly," he said, winking his eye and cocking his head.

"I am for temperance," I said.

"You! and in a bar, too!" exclaimed Lovell. "That's a joke!"

"A pretty sorry joke," I thought.

At that moment a gig stopped at the door. I went

and looked out of the window. An old man and a little boy were in the gig. The old man got out and tied his horse, and then they both came in. Cold and shivering, the little boy ran to the fire. The old man hobbled towards the bar. I ran out to call Nancy. Nancy was busy and could not come in that moment, but bade me take her place. On returning, the little boy was tugging at the old man's coat, begging him to come to the fire and warm himself.

"Don't, grandfather, don't!" begged the little boy.

Lovell had thrown himself on an old bench, and was laughing.

"Get out!" said the old man snappishly to the little boy.

"Don't, grandfather!" pleaded the little boy.

"Go away, I tell you!" cried the old man, standing up before the bar, and holding on to the shelf. I saw that he was already quite overcome with liquor.

"Where's the man that tends the bar?" asked the old man, looking stupidly around. "Where's the man that tends here, I should like to know—Mr. Somebody?"

"O grandfather, don't! We shall never get home, and the dark's coming on," again pleaded the little boy, looking very much distressed.

Could I go to the bar and hand more rum to that poor old man, already more than half drunk—and that, too, in spite of the pleadings of the little boy?

"Come and sit down here, sir," I said pleasantly. "Here is a nice warm fire," handing him a chair.

"Well, I will," answered the old man. The little boy looked gratefully at me. After he was seated, I again ran out and told Nancy.

Meantime, an old customer came in, who marched up to the bar and asked for a glass of brandy.

"There's somebody else," cried Nancy. "Go in, Hugh, and mind your business. I'm busy, you see."

"Go," added Mrs. Otis; "Nancy can't be spared now."

I hesitated a moment.

"Why don't you go?" cried Nancy.

"I can't give drink to that old man, Nancy; I really cannot," I answered decidedly.

With an angry look she left her work, and hastened into the bar. How I felt, as I saw the liquor dealt out to the old man! The little boy almost cried. "We shall never get home!" he said piteously. I helped them into the gig. It was evident, by the way which the old man jerked his bridle, that he was already unfit to guide his horse. The little boy said, "It is six miles we have to go, and the dark is coming on. I don't know what will become of us!" Neither did I. They had perils before them; but intoxicating drink had created them.

"It is not your business nor mine to say who shall or who shall not buy at our bar, Hugh," said Nancy,

after they were gone. "It is nothing to us. They can judge for themselves."

"But Hugh says he's a temperance man," said Lovell.

"Temperance! so am I temperance!" exclaimed Nancy. "But it is not for me to take care of other people. People must act according to their own conscience."

Yes, that is so; and I felt that I must act according to mine. That night I lay down in the little bunk—a little place in the bar-room—where the barkeeper slept, and where I now slept, and troubled thoughts began to arise in my mind. What should I—what could I do? I could not tend a bar. I could not deal out liquor to any poor fellow that might ask for it. On the other hand, could I tell Mr. Otis of my scruples? Could I run the risk of hurting Mr. Otis's feelings, ay, and the risk of being turned away also, just at the beginning of winter, when I had found it so hard to secure any place at all? I felt very, very unhappy. There was not a friend whom I could consult or ask advice from—none, at least, but my Almighty Friend and Heavenly Father. In the severe conflict which followed in my soul, there was nothing I could do but spread the case out before my God, beseech him to guide my steps aright and give me strength equal to my day. When I retired to rest, every now and then the image of the

piteous little boy flitted before me. I dreamed that he and the old man were dying in the snow, the gig broken, and the horse running away.

The next day Mr. Otis came back. I found he went to engage a bar-keeper, but failing to do so, concluded to wait till somebody offered. They could get along pretty well between himself, Nancy, and me. Me! What could I do? I must act in a deliberate manner against my conscience, or take a stand on the side of conscience. I remembered how my mother, in perplexed and trying cases, used to consult her minister, her dear old minister. Oh, how I wished I had such an adviser! I thought of Mr. Devins, whose preaching I had heard since becoming a scholar of Lion Academy. But he did not know me, neither did I know him; and I was sure I could not go to a stranger with my troubles and perplexities, although one's minister would seem the surest and best friend in a case like mine. I wanted to speak with Mrs. Otis about the matter. She was so friendly, it seemed to me she would side with me; indeed, I was sure she could not, in her heart, approve of rum-selling.

One evening she and I were sitting together by the dining-room fire. She was darning stockings, and I had my eyes on my book and my mind on the bar, whence, at this moment, issued high words, as if a brawl were brewing.

"Do you think, Mrs. Otis," I asked (having puzzled my head a long time how to introduce the subject in a natural manner), "do you think it is altogether right to sell liquor, Mrs. Otis?"

"Why, Hugh?"

"I only just wanted to know what you thought about it, Mrs. Otis."

"Liquor is sold," answered she, "and it will be sold; so I do not know why we should not sell it as well as anybody else. We could not keep an inn unless we did."

"And yet getting drunk is a real sin. The Bible ranks drunkards among thieves and such people. It says that 'neither thieves, nor revilers, nor *drunkards* shall inherit the kingdom of God,'" said I (1 Cor. vi. 10).

"Certainly," exclaimed Mrs. Otis: "it is a very bad, a very wicked thing, to get drunk—very bad! and it brings a great deal of misery on a family."

"Oh yes," I said eagerly; "the Bible says: 'The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty;' and it says again, 'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.' And it says more: 'Look not on the wine when it is red; for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder'" (Prov. xxiii. 21, 29–32).

"Yes," agreed the landlady, "it is just so. I've seen Scripture exemplified more than once in just this way." And she went on to relate one or two instances of a drunkard's fare and fate. We both then stood upon the same ground in regard to the sin of drunkenness.

"Well, Mrs. Otis, who is to blame for it? That man you have just told about, who was found dead in the snow—who was to blame for bringing him there, do you think?"

"Why, himself to be sure. He had no business to get drunk. He knew better. People must know how to moderate and restrain their appetites. Every tub, you know, must stand on its own bottom."

"But is it right to put temptation in the way of people, Mrs. Otis? It is not everybody that is strong enough to resist temptation, you know. Ought we not to keep people out of harm's way, if we can?" I asked earnestly.

"I think it is about as much as we can do to take care of ourselves," answered the landlady. "We have no right to say what others shall or shall not do."

"Yes, I know we have to take care of ourselves; and, among other things, we must take care not to injure or destroy our neighbour. The Bible says: 'Woe unto him that gives his neighbour drink, that puts his bottle to him and makes him drunken'" (Hab. ii. 15).

"Why, Hugh, yes, indeed, I would not have people murderers or thieves on any account!" exclaimed Mrs. Otis.

"Nor drunkards? which the Bible reckons just as bad as either."

"No, nor drunkards. I am sure I would not have people drunkards. It is making themselves beasts."

"And you would not, in any way, help to make people thieves or murderers?"

"Mercy! Hugh, what a question to ask! Who do you take me for?"

"And you would not help, in any way, to make people drunkards?" I asked respectfully, but earnestly, for my mind was full of the subject.

"I hope not," cried the landlady; "I hope not. What should I want to make people drunkards for?"

Alas! do not multitudes want to make people drunkards for money? Do they not do it in order to get rich?

There was a long pause, and Mrs. Otis kept at her darning. There was one more question, if I dared ask it.

"May I ask you one question, Mrs. Otis?" I at length said, my heart palpitating.

"Ask what you have a mind to," she answered shortly. "I can answer it or not, just as I please."

I trembled, I know I did, as I spoke. "But is not tending a bar and selling liquors by the glass, which you know will intoxicate, and even selling it to people who are already tipsy, and hardly know what they want, and to others who we are sure will be so, if they go on drinking,—is not this helping to make people drunkards, as sure as can be?"

Mrs. Otis's face coloured very red, and I was afraid I had gone too far. She had always suffered me to talk with her, and now I had presumed upon her good nature. I twisted in my chair, and wished I had not said so, or that somebody would just come in and break the uncomfortable silence.

"All you say may be true enough, Hugh," at last she answered, in a grave tone. "But it is very certain we can't keep tavern here without a bar; and if we leave here on account of any such scruples, somebody else will take it and keep one; so that it does not make much difference, you see. We must take things as they are. When the temperance people talked to the master, he got really angry with them. There will be a bar here, on this spot; the public want it, as he told them, and why should not he keep it as well as anybody else? Mr. Otis is a strict temperance man himself, you know. He never drinks anything."

With this reasoning, what becomes of one's personal responsibility? what of our accountability to

God for the use which we make of ourselves? Can we excuse ourselves by pleading what others would do in our circumstances, or what they would neglect to do?

My mother had not so taught us. Do thou no wrong; enter upon no doubtful course of conduct; be loyal to the authority of conscience and God. Make no excuse for a sinful act, when your inclinations conflict with known and acknowledged duty. Seek fairly, honestly, candidly, and prayerfully to find out what is the right principle, and then act upon it firmly, and with an undivided heart. It matters not what others may think of you, or reason for you; you may be sure that God means you should act for yourself, and to him you are to stand or fall.

Several days passed away, and I was so busy I had no time to dwell upon the subject which was so painful to me, except to see almost daily evidence that people were made drunkards at the bar. Although liable, at any time, to be called to give the intoxicating cup, some time passed by, and I was not actually called upon; so I concluded, under the homeless circumstances in which I was placed, not to be too squeamish upon the subject. A week or two slipped by, and the family were as friendly to me as I could wish, or as I deserved. Except in one thing, I had not been happier since my mother died. I loved my studies and my teacher, and I felt thankful for such

comfortable shelter. What more could a poor orphan ask? one might say.

Thus it went on, until the death of a relative of Mrs. Otis, when all the family were called to church one Sunday morning, leaving me in charge of the bar-room.

"Take good care," said Mr. Otis on going out of the door, "and do as ye would be done by, Hugh." It was a remarkable thing for him to say to me, and I pondered it for some time, as I took my Bible and sat down by the bar-room fire. It was a cold, blustering day. One or two loungers came in, asked where the master was, warmed themselves, and went out. At last a gig drove up, from which two young men jumped out and came boisterously in.

"Here's Mr. Otis's!" exclaimed one; "always ready with the best glass of brandy anywhere in the country about. His spirits are prime!"

"They say his jokes are too."

"Yes, yes; they relish each other;" and the speaker, opening his coat and taking off his cap, walked towards the bar. "Eh! nobody here! Where's the master? Who waits here?" Turning round, I recognized the eldest brother of little Joe Price—my old school-fellow—whose dissipated habits had almost brought his mother to the grave. Jem told me, a little while before I left, that Sam Price had reformed. But his present appearance did not

look like reforming, and it made my heart ache, as I remembered some of the distressing things Jem had told me about him,—so young, once so promising—for his mother had scraped together means to send him to college—and, as his later career had proved, so unpromising. "Oh dear!" I said to myself, eyeing him, "he shows it in his face. Sam Price used to be so promising a youth. Why will he ruin himself in this way? Why don't he stop? What use can there be in drinking?"

"Who tends the bar?" asked Sam Price, strutting up and down the room with a very consequential air. "I should like to know where the bar-keeper is? Mr. Otis don't leave things in this style."

"Here is a young man here," said his companion, turning towards me. "Where's the master? Who waits on the bar? We are in a hurry."

"He has gone to church. He'll be home soon," I said, with a heart sinking.

"Well, but is there nobody here to wait on travellers? We must be attended to."

"I am left in charge," I answered.

"Step quick then! A glass of brandy and water—pretty stiff glass. One must get warmed up this cold day—a pretty stiff glass!" cried Sam Price.

What a strait I was in! Ought I—could I—with my principles, under any circumstances, become a dram-seller? I never engaged to do so when I came

to live with Mr. Otis. It was no part of my stipulated service or duty. But could I not oblige Mr. Otis a little? It was not, after all, my business, but his. What had I to do with the results or consequences? It was nothing I could prevent or mend. Was there not such a thing as being too particular? Ought I to stand in my own light? All these suggestions shot like lightning through my mind while Sam Price was speaking.

My principles, my conscience forbade. Everything was in favour of obedience. "Do thou no wrong thing," cried conscience. "Dram-drinking is leading Sam Price to ruin; do not you lend a helping hand."

"But what shall I—what can I do?" I asked myself.

A second more, and the die was cast. I defined my position.

"Mr. Price," I answered calmly to his second and angry demand, "Mr. Otis asked me to stay here while they all went to church. I am not a bar-keeper; it is not my work. I cannot consistently sell liquor for anybody else, any more than I could for myself. Will you wait until the master comes home? He'll be back soon."

The two young men looked at me as I spoke. Sam Price, with a sneering surprise upon his face, said, "And who are you, pray? A youngster who sets himself up to be somebody! Mr. Otis has got queer stuff in his house."

"Stuff that is likely to hurt him!" cried his companion with an oath.

"Who are you? I've seen you before," exclaimed Sam; "haven't I?"

"My name is Hugh Fisher. I used to go to school with your brother Joe."

"Yes, yes; well, what are you here for?"

I told him.

"Do I understand you to say that you could give us something to drink, but you won't?" asked Sam's companion, growing angry as he thought longer of my refusal.

"The plain truth is, that I cannot give you anything."

"Why? Is the bar locked up?"

"No, sir. I could get what you wish, but my conscience forbids," I replied firmly.

"Were you not put here to serve the customers?" asked Sam Price's companion, in a rough, swaggering manner.

"I did not engage to live with Mr. Otis for this purpose," was my reply.

"Engaged or not," said an old toper who had come in during the conversation, and stood blinking his eyes before the fire—"engaged or not, I reckon Mr. Otis expects you to attend on customers; and you'll rue the day that you did not, or I lose my reckoning!"

"Well!" exclaimed Sam Price, "I shall stop until

I see Mr. Otis, and find out from him whether he puts a temperance agent into his bar-room to lecture to his customers."

It was not long before the church services were closed, and I hardly knew whether it was a relief or not to see the people coming home. What would Mr. Otis say? What would Mrs. Otis? and what would Nancy say? Should I be turned away? I went out towards the barn. How I longed for a single friend to speak freely with. I stood, as it seemed, all alone. Nobody to encourage me, and nobody to sympathize with me; nobody to back me up, or stand by me.

But no matter—I had not been false to my conscience. It had spoken to me; I heard and obeyed. The consequences must be left to God, who careth for us. I went behind an old stage-coach, and there kneeled before God, to ask guidance and strength from him. He had helped me before, and I knew he could help me now. I prayed for an obedient and courageous heart. My heavenly Father comforted me. When I arose from my knees, I felt ready and willing to suffer for conscience' sake. I felt ready and willing to suffer in God's appointed way. A peaceful feeling stole over me, which took away all my fears.

At dinner-time, nothing was said about it in the kitchen, for it was not known. Mr. Otis opened the door and gave some orders, and shut it quickly again.

When I went to church in the afternoon, how wistfully did I look round and wish some of the good people there were my friends. I looked at the minister, and longed to go and talk with him.

After supper, as I sat reading in the kitchen, a message came that Mr. Otis wanted to see me in the back sitting-room. My knees almost smote each other as I arose; but I lifted up my heart in silent prayer to God for his direction in this my hour of need. "O my God, help me, for Christ's sake," I ejaculated, as I went through the long dining-room, and opened the door of the little sitting-room, to confront the master, who sat with his feet on the stove, and his hands raised and crossed at the back of his head. As I walked in, he directed me to a seat. I suppose it was not many seconds, but it seemed a great while, before he spoke.

"Well, Hugh," he at length said, "what was the fracas in the bar-room, while I was at church?"

"No fracas, sir," I answered, and then went on to state the case as it occurred. He listened attentively, with his stern eye fixed on me. But I felt no fear; if he turned me out of doors, I thought God would take me up and provide for me a home. At any rate, I was willing to trust Him. After finishing my recital, there was a pause, which he broke by asking,—

"And do you call that acting for the interest of your employers, Hugh?"

I told him I engaged myself as an errand-boy, and not as a bar-keeper; and that if he had wanted me to come as the latter, I could not have done so, because it was contrary to my principles.

"But could you not have been a little obliging?" asked he. "It was but very little I asked of you; and we have shown ourselves friendly to you, a poor boy, Hugh."

"Yes, sir, yes, sir!" I exclaimed. I looked at my clothes. It was the suit that Mrs. Otis gave me. "Yes, sir; I have got a good home here. I feel thankful for it. I am willing to do, but—;" I stopped a moment, and then added, "I can't sell liquors, Mr. Otis; indeed, I can't. If it's wicked to be a drunkard, it is wicked to help in any way to make a drunkard, and my conscience tells me never to do so. I must mind my conscience, Mr. Otis, at any risk."

I expected quite a tempest; instead of which, he looked into the fire a while, and then said,—

"You may go to bed now, Hugh; further orders another time."

As I went away, I could not guess, from his manner, exactly how he felt towards me; but in his last words I thought I saw something ominous and foreboding: "Further orders another time!" And what would those orders be? To leave his house? So I feared. "Well," I said, half sighing, "if Mr. Otis turns me away for this, there is nothing for me to be

sorry for; but I will wait quietly, doing my duty until he does." And yet the thought of being turned away—it would come up. Mr. Otis was an off-hand man. He was a rum-seller. I, a boy—a poor boy—had sided against him. Alas, I had nothing to expect.





CHAPTER VI.

SCHOOL TROUBLES.

THE school, the academy, the teachers, and the lessons, all seemed right to me; but there were boys who kept perpetually grumbling. "This rule is too strict." "Mr. Hanson has no business to forbid us that." "Mr. Hanson is a knotty old fellow, and must be chopped down." "The lessons are too long." "Too much by half is required of the boys; they ought not to stand it." "They must show their teeth."

Lovell Laws was generally the chief of complainers. Every rule and regulation he seemed to have a grudge against; and yet he was so smooth in his appearance, I do not think the teachers suspected him. Practical jokes at last began to be played; and very foolish and sorry ones, I thought.

One morning, a quantity of brimstone was found in the stove, so that when the fire began to burn, the smell was so suffocating, the teacher was obliged to

give the boys their liberty until the stove was cleared. Pins were placed in the teachers' chairs with their points up. The roll disappeared from Mr. Hanson's desk. Almost every day something of this kind occurred, greatly hindering the daily business of the school.

No clew could be discovered to the perpetrators. The teachers appealed to the honour, the manliness, the principles of the boys; every one denied the slightest knowledge of the circumstances. The state of affairs reached the ears of the trustees, and when some things were found to have been done which really endangered the academy buildings, it was proposed to offer a reward for the detection of the offenders. It made much talk in the village, and created much anxiety among the teachers. Such things had never occurred before. The good order and high-toned character of the school seemed to be at stake; and the disorder must be traced to some of the new scholars, who had entered at that term. There were but five or six of us, and of course we became objects of close scrutiny by those in authority.

One morning the academy bell did not ring. "Where's the bell?" asked one and another, as, at the usual hour, with books in hand we began to assemble. But few boys had arrived when we got there. "What's the matter with the bell?" was the first question. The tongue of the bell had disap-

peared, and the rope had been cut off where it was fastened to the wheel. Nobody could tell how the building had been entered, or divine who had done the mischief. Mr. Hanson had been early informed of it by the boy who swept the rooms and kindled the fires, and had hastened to inspect the premises. Lovell Laws had a good deal to say about it, wondering, and guessing, and listening to everything which the others had to say.

It was some time before the schôol came to order, and when fairly opened, there was a restless inattention among the boys not very favourable to study. Mr. Hanson looked stern. Mr. Perry, the assistant teacher, seemed grieved and anxious. At recess, there was a rumour rife that Mr. Hanson had found a knife in the belfry, and the knife would give some clew to the perpetrators. The village boys declared, if they could be found out they would be sent away in disgrace, for one of the trustees said so. A knife had been found! Everybody was likely to examine his pockets and search his desk to see if his was safe. Many of the boys began to take out their knives and show them. I thrust my hand into my pocket. My knife was not there, but I knew I had left it in my desk. "Where's yours, Fisher?" exclaimed one or two, as several of us clustered round the pump, exhibiting knives. "In the school, I suppose; it is not in my pocket," I answered, and ran in to get it. It

was not in, or on, or under my desk! I examined it over and over again, in hot haste. Then I thought I must have left it at home somewhere, in my other jacket perhaps, for I remembered having changed it.

On going home, one of the boys joined me, and asked if I had found my knife. "No," I answered; "it is in my other jacket, I suppose. I have not had it this morning."

The first thing I did was to find my jacket; but there was no knife in it. I asked the servants if they had seen my knife anywhere. Nobody had seen it. It was curious that I should lose it just at this time, although I felt very sure I had mislaid it somewhere about the house.

In the afternoon there was another rumour that some of the trustees had met that day. I began to feel a little uneasy about my knife; at anyrate, I thought, just at that time I should rather have my knife to show than not, especially as I had not the means of buying another. How or where I could have lost it, I could not conjecture. I examined all my pockets—there was not a hole in one of them; and it seemed to me as if I had had it that morning. That day and the next passed, and the absence of the bell seemed perpetually to remind us that something was amiss; while the stern and sober look of Mr. Hanson's face was enough to awaken apprehension on the part of the offenders, whoever they were.

Saturday morning there was something in his opening remarks to the boys which plainly showed that evidence which could throw light upon past disorders was before him, and that measures would be soon taken to cure the school of existing evils. His tone was very severe. The boys looked at him and looked around at one another. They were profoundly still while he spoke.

How many times did I thrust my hands into both pockets, vainly wishing and hoping to grasp my knife!

"Where in the world can it be just now?" again and again I said to myself.

The boys were very sober that Saturday morning. We were all dismissed as usual. I was very busy all the afternoon; but as I occasionally met the scholars in the street, we stopped a moment to exchange a few words upon pending matters and mysteries.

"Who could it be? Whose knife was it? for one of the village boys declared it was a knife Mr. Hanson found." So we wondered. If for a moment a shadow of suspicion passed through my mind that Mr. Hanson had my missing knife, I instantly banished it with, "It cannot be!" and I would not give myself any unnecessary concern. The family at the hotel often asked me about the affair, which I freely talked over; indeed, the villagers prided themselves upon their academy, whose recent ill-usage

they resented and were ashamed of. No sooner had I opened the kitchen door, on my return from an errand to a distant part of the village just before supper, than some one bawled out, "You are sent for to go up to the preceptor's, Hugh, at seven o'clock —there's for you! What does that mean, I should like to know—don't it look threatening?"

I said I did not know what it meant, but I could go and find out quick enough.

I sat down and ate my supper without speaking.

"Pity you had not your knife!" said some one.

"A thousand pities!" added the cook.

"I mean, Hugh, you shall have one," cried the hostler; "here, Hugh, you shall have mine. Put it in your pocket, and show it to the preceptor if anything comes of this knife story. Here, Hugh, take it, and welcome;" and with good-natured warmth he slipped the knife down into my pocket.

"Oh, I can't now," I quickly answered, though with a feeling sense of his kindness. "My own knife is really gone. I can't account for it, but I must deal truly."

"Take it," cried the hostler, "take it. It is yours. We can all prove it's yours."

"When I come back," answered I.

"But suppose, by some unaccountable way or other, the preceptor has got your knife. Now, you did not cut the bell-rope, I suppose. What are you

going to do? You are innocent, and having the knife will prove your innocence."

The hostler was very earnest.

"Take it," cried another; "*I* would."

"Not for the world!" I answered. "The supposed evidence would be false. I would not do anything I was ashamed of. That would be downright lying," said I, buttoning up my jacket to go out. "As for the knife, I shall be very thankful for it after I get back; because, if mine never comes to light, I cannot afford to buy another."

I ran down to the preceptor's as fast as I could, and it was not long before I was seated in his study. How my heart did beat! After addressing some remarks to me about honour and confession, and the rules of the institution, he put his hand in his pocket, and, drawing forth a knife, asked me if that was mine.

"Yes, sir," I answered, instantly recognizing it.

"This was found on the belfry-stairs," continued he, "and it is supposed its owner must know something of the injury done to the bell."

"It is my knife, sir; but I do not know how it came there." And as I was speaking, two of the trustees came in and took their seats opposite to me. They eyed me very narrowly.

"It is useless for you to deny it," said one; "quite useless. There is the proof. You had better tell

out, at once, who were engaged with you. It will save time, and perhaps will be better for you." His cold, hard tone, fell repulsively upon my ear.

"Oh, my mother!" I murmured in my heart.

"Speak out, young man," added the other trustee; "the quicker the better. This state of things in the academy must be righted immediately."

I thought I should sink to the floor. I felt awed and frightened. Again I denied all knowledge of the transaction.

The painful interview lasted for some time, until I was angrily dismissed by one of the trustees, with the injunction not to appear at school until I heard from them again. "The most dogged boy I ever met with!" he cried, as I went out at the door. "The boy deserves"—the closing of the door prevented me hearing the remainder of the sentence.

The cold night air swept refreshingly on my hot, fevered face, as I plunged along the snow, hardly knowing whither I went. Blamed, disgraced, blasted in my hopes and prospects of getting on in my studies —for if I was to be turned away, and in disgrace too, from the Lion Academy, I knew not where else to go, or who would admit me to another institution —a painful and maddening sense of wrong and injustice took possession of me. "What does it mean?" I cried aloud. "A poor, friendless orphan—no home, no friend to flee to in this wide world! What will

the Otises say? What will become of me?" I ran along the street, as if to run from myself and the unhappy entanglement in which I was caught. It was a dark, cold Saturday night in December—cheerless, desolate. A bright light issued from many a window along the street, which seemed to mock me in my hour of lonely agony.

"Oh, mother! mother!" I cried aloud.

I dreaded going into the house. Turning into the shed, I felt my way to a grindstone, and sat down upon its frame to compose my mind and look soberly at my position. Then I betook myself to my best and only refuge: I leaned over the grindstone, and poured forth my sorrows to the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. Like the psalmist of old, I made God my refuge. Many a time, in secret, had I dedicated myself to him, and now I cast myself upon his gracious love, and begged him to give me strength to act according to his will in this unhappy affair. I entreated his help, and besought him to be my defence and to plead my innocence. What a comfort was prayer to me! I became more composed, and at last summoned resolution to enter the kitchen and meet the servants, who, I supposed, were waiting to learn the issue of my visit.

"Well!" cried the hostler, "well, Hugh, you've got back? Come to the fire. You're ready to take the knife now, ain't you?"

"What did the preceptor want?" inquired another.

"Are they found out?" eagerly asked a third.

I sat down and told my story.

"I say they might have known better!" cried the hostler. "Just as if a boy like you, with your hands full from morning till night, would have set about devising all this mischief. It is some of those idle chaps, who have nothing to do, and mortally hate to study."

"Why, Hugh, it wasn't you, was it?" asked the cook, amazed that the preceptor and two trustees were against me.

"It certainly was not me," I replied.

"I would not have owned to the knife; for there is no use in making it a proof against you when you know you are innocent," said the chambermaid.

"Why, I would not lie myself out of difficulty on any account," I said. "Then I should have been guilty, but now I feel innocent."

Their counsels and sympathy, though kindly meant, gave me little comfort, and I took up a lamp to go to bed.

"Will you tell Mrs. Otis?" asked the cook.

"Not to-night," I answered. "It makes me heart-sick to think of it."

"And everybody knowing it so!" cried the chambermaid.

"Why, what will you do, Hugh?" asked the hostler for the fifth or sixth time.

"Trust all my ways to God, Ned," I replied, with

a profound and feeling sense that this was the only right way.

Sunday was a sorrowful day to me. It is true that conscious innocence supported my fainting spirits, yet there I was, suspected and arraigned without being able to prove my innocence; and I saw nothing before me but a speedy ending of all my long-cherished plans about getting an education, without any plan or prospect of doing anything else; and what was worse, with no earthly friend to go to in my hour of need.

"It is all the will of God," I kept saying to myself. And the words of a hymn, often repeated by my mother, rose to my lips:

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

Monday I did not go to school, neither did I hear anything further from the trustees. After four days, Mr. Otis, who had been absent for some time, came home. It was not long before he came out to the wood-house, where I was at work faint-hearted enough, and immediately broached the subject.

"And you don't know how your knife came there?" said the master.

"No, sir; it is my knife, but I never had a hand in any of that mischief. I came here to study, and that is what I have tried to do."

Nothing more was said, and the master walked hastily off.

The next morning, as I was eating my breakfast, he opened the dining-room door and said, "Hugh, you may take your books and go to school this morning."

"What did you say, sir?" I exclaimed, hardly crediting my ears, while my fork dropped from my hand on the floor.

"I say," repeated the master, "you can go to the academy again—the trustees say so."

How I wanted to inquire more! But he shut the door, and I was left to surprise, gratitude, and joy. What did it mean?

The hostler, chambermaid, and cook soon knew it, and seemed very glad. We all congregated around the kitchen fire, wondering at the new aspect of affairs.

"The real offender is found out, I guess!" exclaimed Ned.

"And he richly deserves a whipping!" cried the chambermaid. "Jem Cook said that the preceptor stated the case to the boys, telling them how your knife had been found there, and how you solemnly declared you had no hand in the mischief; and saying if the real offender had a spark of manliness, of

honour, or of generosity, he would appear, and not allow a poor boy, and an innocent one too, to be punished. He is a mean, good-for-nothing fellow, I'm thinking."

"That's what he is!" echoed the cook. "But perhaps he has come out now and confessed, for Hugh is clear. He is sent for, to go to the academy again."

"And glad am I of it!" cried Ned.

"I wish we could know more about it," said the chambermaid. "Somebody must have confessed."

"Of course," added the cook; "for how else could Hugh be cleared? Well, Hugh, tell us all about it as soon as you find out. I am glad and thankful you are out of the scrape. I should like to know who the rogues are."

I did not happen to reach the school-room until after the boys had assembled; and the door was locked, as it usually was during morning devotions, in order to prevent any interruption to the exercises. Mr. Hanson was talking to the boys. I could hear enough to know that it was in relation to present difficulties; but what point he was upon, I could not find out. It seemed almost an hour that I stood out in the hall waiting, but the time was improved by study, and at last the door was unlocked, and I walked in. All eyes were so turned towards me that I felt abashed and frightened.

After school, the preceptor asked me to accompany

him to his room. His kind and considerate manner both puzzled and pleased me.

"Fisher," said he, as I walked by his side, "Mr. Otis has been to my house to speak a word for you; and he has been to see the trustees also."

I bowed my head.

"And I am glad to hear such a good account of you," he continued.

I looked up surprised.

"Mr. Otis tells me how strictly you keep the Sabbath. He tells me you have strong and decided temperance principles; and, what is better still, that you are not afraid of acting up to them."

There came a suffocating feeling in my throat. I believe it was thankfulness to God springing up from my heart.

"He says you are faithful and studious," continued Mr. Hanson; "that doing what seems to you right is your main desire, and that nothing tempts you to swerve from the line of duty;—in a word, it seems to us morally improbable that a boy, such as Mr. Otis represents you to be, can have had any hand in this foolish, insubordinate, and mischievous conduct. And although there is the knife, which you own to be yours; and though you cannot account for its being up in the belfry of the academy, and seeming to tell against you,—yet, weighed in the balance with the steadiness of your conduct, the excellence of your

principles, and the plans you are working to accomplish, it is not enough. We are not willing to believe you guilty, and so we suffer you to resume your studies, and wait patiently for further light on the matter. In a word, Fisher, you are exonerated, and that solely in consequence of the character which you have earned at Mr. Otis's. Mr. Otis could not have shown a stronger interest in you, Fisher, if he had been your father; and, in return, I hope your conduct may be the means of doing him some good. And," said the preceptor, laying his hand upon my shoulder, "you here see the value of keeping unflinchingly to right principles. Some other time I will talk to you about your plans. You shall have an education, Fisher."

In some way or other I uttered out a "Thank ye, sir;" nor, with my heart full of emotion, was I sorry to have him break off the encouraging words which he spoke, and let me go.

It seemed to me that I was now repaid for all the lonely struggles I had gone through during the last four years, in the maintenance of the principles in which my mother had educated me. They were the most encouraging, grateful words ever spoken in my ear, and by the good preceptor of Lion Academy too. They were, perhaps, the first of the kind which I had ever heard. How refreshing, how soothing were they to my sorrowful spirit!

I had not gone far down the street when one of the scholars joined me, to whom I had promised to lend some book; I have forgotten now what it was. He had always shown himself very friendly, and now he grasped my arm, exclaiming, "Good, Hugh! good! All of us that knew you, knew you had nothing to do with the matter. We never believed it for a moment. Henry Reed told Mr. Perry that you couldn't have done it—knife or no knife; you were not the one to be going about wasting your time and doing such mischief. It wasn't in the nature of things." He was very earnest. It was Jasper Twombly who thus sympathized in my acquittal.

On reaching home, as we went into the yard, Ned, the hostler, caught a glimpse of us, and came running out of the stable. "All is square, then, is it?" he eagerly asked. "Hugh is just where he ought to be."

"Precisely," answered my companion. "All of us that knew Hugh Fisher, knew he had no hand in the bell matter."

"Just so I said," responded Ned; "it is not your industrious, studying fellows that are up to such things."

The cook threw up the window, and screamed to know "if he was found out, the real offender, the sneaking, meddling little fool!" while I went in pur-

suit of the book, leaving Jasper Twombly to satisfy her curiosity.

"Well, what made them at last conclude it was not Hugh?" the chambermaid was asking as I came back, her head and shoulders stretched out of the window, and her face glowing with interest.

"Oh, the preceptor told the boys this morning that Mr. Otis came up to his house, and gave such a good account of Hugh as clearly to do away the evidence about the knife; and then he talked to us a long while about the worth of a good character."

"Mr. Otis did!" exclaimed Ned. "Well, I thought sure he would turn Hugh out of the house one day, when he would not tend the bar; but I believe in my heart the master has thought more of him ever since."

"So much for not being afraid to do right," said the chambermaid, drawing in her head. "Honesty is the best policy, after all."

I longed to get away alone; and the first moment I could do so I fell on my knees before God, and thanked him for the friends he had raised up for me, and for the merciful deliverance he had vouchsafed me. How I blessed him for the strength he had given me to do right, ever since my mother's death; that he had not suffered me to wander from, or give up, or forget the religious principles and habits in which I had been early nurtured; that I had been

able to hold steadfastly to them, whether my companions laughed at me, or abused me, or kept aloof. If I had been ashamed of them, or had turned from them ever so little, on my first departure from home and dwelling among strangers, I should never have regained them while living with Mr. Otis. The influences there were all worldly and depressing. They were calculated to bring people down to a low standard, rather than raise them up to a higher one. At Uncle Hugh's, God helped me to live in obedience to his commands, and not to forsake the instruction of my mother. Every instance of doing right gives us strength for days to come, as anybody will find out who tries. It was easier to obey Him at Mr. Otis's. Besides, He made me more willing to suffer for conscience' sake, casting all my burden upon Him. Many and many a time I could not see how things would turn out, and I could not discern what even the next day would bring forth; but I always kept praying, "Lead me not into temptation, deliver me from evil, make the path of thy commandments plain before me, and give me strength to walk therein." I knew I was weak and sinful, needing God my Father to direct my steps, God my Saviour to wash my sins away, and God the Holy Spirit to refresh and strengthen my often fainting spirit.

Now thankful, rejoicing, I called upon my soul and all that is within me to bless his holy name.

I would say to every boy who may read this story, in the language of the Bible, "My son, FORGET NOT MY LAW; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

"When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee: for the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Prov. iii. 1–4; vi. 20–23).

As some of my readers may feel curious to know what happened afterwards, and whether the real offenders were ever found out, I will add that no disorders of this kind ever occurred again during my connection with the academy, which was two years or more. From some cause or other they suddenly stopped; nobody could say certainly who the actors were, although Lovell Laws and Peter Emery were, from various little circumstances, strongly suspected. They both left at the close of the term, when some of

their old companions broadly hinted what part they played in the transactions. It is very certain that none of the boys thought more highly of them for their folly and mischief. Tricks of this kind (not unfrequently practised by school-boys), which damage property and derange the general exercises of a school, develop low and vulgar tastes, and show that the perpetrators are devoid of high and manly principles. It is a poor and pitiful kind of fun. And fun that consists in grieving teachers and inflicting injuries on pupils, will surely harden the heart, blunt the conscience, and lead to an utter disregard of the laws both of God and man. Let boys be careful how they indulge in it.

Early in the spring, after the snow began to melt, the tongue of the bell was found hidden behind a stone wall in the outskirts of the village. It had called us many and many a time to order, but it could not tell us who degraded it from its station of usefulness and post of honour in the academy belfry, to a neglected and tongue-tied piece of lumber by the side of a stone wall.

I stayed two years in Mr. Otis's family, and never was a truer or firmer friend than he was to me. Long before he left the inn he gave up the bar, and turned the place into a strict temperance house. A large pot of coffee was always on the kitchen stove, ready for travellers on a frosty day; and many a one

seemed very well contented with the change. Others grumbled, abused Mr. Otis for his folly, warned him of the loss of custom, and threatened to injure his house. He had settled the thing in his own mind and counted the cost, although it was a great struggle for him to reach it, and he took what people said as quietly as could be expected. Sometimes he was ruffled when some of his old friends came and expected the usual indulgence.

"Ah, Hugh, it has cost me ten times more of a struggle to give up selling liquor, though I have got plenty to live on, than it did you to refuse to go to the bar, even when you were liable to lose your home for it," said he to me one day; "and, Hugh, I doubt if I ever would have given it up, but for you."

This was said when I went to pay him a visit, after I entered college.

I am sure I had cause to bless God for making me the humble instrument of doing good.

CHAPTER VII.

A VISIT TO HENRY AND AGNES.

MORE than three years had gone by since I had seen my dear brother and sister. We longed to meet, and as soon as Mr. Otis could spare me, during the winter vacation of Lion Academy, I determined to set off to pay them a long-promised visit. As stage-coach riding cost money, which it was my duty to save as much as possible, I started off on foot one clear frosty morning, depending upon what chance rides I might be so fortunate as to secure on my way, the distance being somewhat more than fifty miles.

It was about noon on the second day that I retraced the same road over which Uncle Hugh's waggon bore me more than three years before. If anybody had told me three years would pass before seeing it again, my heart would have sunk at the thought. Even in looking back it seemed a very long time, as each well-remembered object burst upon my view. My legs

became more elastic, and long were the strides I took, impatient to reach my journey's end.

At last I turned down Thomaston Street, where we used to live, and where Henry and Agnes still were with their kind friends. How my heart fluttered. Mrs. Gray's house came first; I soon spied its neat white front. They did not know exactly when I was coming, so that nobody was on the look-out, although I gazed intently at every window, hoping to get a glance at some well-remembered face. I opened the gate, and went up the little paved walk, which I had not ascended since Henry and I took Agnes to her new home with Mrs. Gray the night before I went away.

"Shall I knock, or go in?" I asked myself. Then I concluded to go to the side-door, and walk directly in. Turning round, I saw a little girl running along the side-walk, close up by the fence. She also opened the gate and followed after me. She was a dear little girl, with a bright rosy face, but a great deal bigger than Agnes, I thought.

We again looked at each other—I at the door, and she skipping up the steps. "It is my brother Hugh!" she exclaimed.

"It is my sister Agnes!" cried I.

Then she ran in, exclaiming, "Auntie, auntie, here's Hugh! Hugh has come!"

Mrs. Gray enjoyed it as much as we did. She gave

me a hearty welcome. Agnes threw off her hood and came to me, while we sat looking and laughing in each other's face. I seemed to have found something which had been lost to me. The gush of affection was quite new and almost overpowering, so long had I lived away from my kindred. I had found friendly hearts, indeed, but the love was not like that of family love. For a moment I forgot my brother, in the happiness of a new-found sister.

"O Henry!" I exclaimed, starting up, "where is Henry? I must go and find Henry. I will run down to Mr. French's. Does he look as well as Agnes?" for her bright, healthy, animated face, seemed to fix my delighted attention.

"Poor little fellow," answered Mrs. Gray, her countenance changing, "he has been sick of the scarlet fever. He has got over it, but it has left him poorly."

Agnes offered to accompany me to Mr. French's, and we immediately set off, without accepting even good Mrs. Gray's urgent invitation to stop and take a luncheon.

We were soon at Mr. French's. "Henry is sick in that bed-room," said Agnes, her joyful tone sinking into a mournful cadence, and pointing with her finger towards the house. "I suppose he is in the kitchen now with Auntie French; he loves to stay with her."

"So they are all aunties, Agnes?"

"Yes; and good ones too, Hugh. Henry told me how mother prayed to God to take care of us, before she died; and Henry says he is sure God has put us into kind hands—all of us; you have been, haven't you, Hugh, too?"

She looked inquiringly up into my face, but she did not see the tears that for a moment blurred my eyes. I thanked God that Agnes and Henry had probably never had the lonely hours, or experienced the silent and severe struggles, that I had. Each had had an appropriate discipline.

"I'll go in first," said Agnes, when we reached the door. "We've been expecting you, but we must not surprise Henry, lest it should excite him; and Mrs. Gray says he is very weak." So on tiptoe she stepped across a little entry, and opening the kitchen-door, peeped in. I suppose there was unwonted light in her eye, for I heard a feeble voice exclaim, "Agnes, he's come! Hugh is here!" In a moment more, and the brothers met.

After recovering myself from the first gush of glad feeling, I noticed that Henry was extremely agitated; his lips quivered, his hands trembled, his cheek glowed, and his eye had almost an unnatural brightness. He was sitting in a comfortable stuffed rocking-chair, near which stood a table filled with many objects to interest his mind and divert his attention.

"Here is a little drink," said Mrs. French, who

stood by with a pleasod yet anxious countenance, at the same time offering Henry a tumbler; "take a little, it will make you feel better: it is the excitement; you will feel better, Henry, soon." He drank, while Agnes smoothed his collar, and I gazed upon his face and figure with a love and anxiety which I had never felt before. Henry was changed—oh, how much changed!

Mrs. French then said to me, "The scarlet fever went hard with Henry; but he is a great deal better than he was. He rides out every pleasant day, and your coming will be the best medicine in the world."

"That it will," exclaimed Henry. "Hugh has been in my mind a great deal since I have been sick." Then looking at me from head to foot, "He's a great deal stronger than I am."

Then we told him how Agnes and I met; and in a little while he became more composed, and looked more like himself. What would I not have given to see the ruddy hue of health upon his pale and thin cheek. "But it will be there in time," I said to myself.

By-and-by Mr. French and his two boys came home. They told us we must stay to dinner; so Tommy French ran over to tell Mrs. Gray not to expect us back, for we were to dine with Henry.

If any of the boys who read this have ever been from their family friends for any length of time, they

will know that we had a great deal to say. There were Henry, Agnes, Mrs. Gray, the Frenches, and all the neighbours of the street, who seemed also very glad to see me, and learn what had befallen me since I left, and what prospects beamed upon me for the future.

How surprised and glad I was to find so many dear friends. For everybody seemed a friend that had known and honoured my mother, and they loved to speak of her to me.

I remained at the Grays and Frenches nine days. Agnes and I stayed with Henry, and one very clear, pleasant day, he was brought over to Mrs. Gray's; so that our friends planned for us to be together as much as possible. Henry grew better while I was there, so that fears for him did not continue to mar our happiness.

The last day came, as come it must; for there is no way to stop the ceaseless flow of time. I thought I could bear almost anything, I had been thrown about in the world so roughly; but the thought of parting was very painful to me. If Henry had been well, I do not think it would have been so bad; but he looked, at times, very ill, though everybody pronounced him better. The doctor said that time and spring weather would work wonders for him, and that we need not alarm ourselves. Indeed, he would not wonder if next summer should find him as robust as

I was, when he should come up to Mr. Otis's and compare strength with me.

On the last night preceding the present separation, as on the last night before the former, Henry and I slept together. Agnes stayed at home, but she was coming over to breakfast. We were at the Frenches. It was a snug little bed-room which Henry occupied, close to and warmed by the kitchen, where Mrs. French, during the day, could keep him company; and where, when he was better, he used to sit, hour after hour, talking with her and watching her household occupations. Henry and I retired early on the last night. We thought we could talk better in bed. The kitchen was soon deserted, except by puss, who lay purring in the stuffed chair which Henry had vacated. A little fire glimmered in the stove; we could see its flickering on the wall, while the bright stars looked in at the window.

"When I come again," I began to say, in the course of our talk in relation to some plan or another.

"You will not find me here then, Hugh," interrupted my brother.

I stopped, held my breath, and was afraid to ask why.

"And I want to speak about it for one thing," continued he, with a steady voice.

"Hugh, Mrs. French has been a mother to me,

and Mr. French has been a father to me. I can never repay them, but you may be able to do it, Hugh, some day or other. They have been at considerable expense for me. I want to ask you, if you are ever able, when you grow up to be a man and have begun business for yourself—I want to ask you to pay them."

I listened with breathless attention; and not seeming to understand the drift of his words, I tried to say cheerfully, "Oh, maybe you'll be able to do it before I am. You always had such a knack of getting along. Maybe you will have to help me."

It was some moments before any reply was made. The silence pained me, and I became restless.

"I suppose you'll grant me my last request, Hugh?" at length Henry said, in a mournful tone.

"Yes, yes! Anything you'll ask, Henry! I'll do anything for you. But you must cheer up, Henry. You are going to get well; the doctor and everybody else says you are."

"No, Hugh, I know I shall not. I feel, all the time, a dreadful sinking that the doctor cannot cure, and that other people don't know about. I am going to die. But I do not feel afraid to die, Hugh!"

Here I burst into tears, and Henry stopped. Then he spoke again, but so calmly, so sweetly, so tenderly, so hopefully, that it seemed as if an angel were near us.

My own agitation gradually subsided, though I could not utter a word. Never shall I forget that night. At last I said, "Oh, Henry, you are a Christian—a real Christian—I know you are! It does me good to hear you talk so. It is as mother used to talk. I have not heard anything like it ever since I have been gone. Henry, you really love God, don't you? And Jesus Christ has given you a new heart, I trust?"

"Jesus Christ has been my best friend—the nearest of all to me. He is, as mother used to say, very precious." Just as he had ceased speaking, the kitchen door opened, and some one, on tiptoe, came towards the bed-room. It was Mrs. French.

"My dear child," said she, "I am afraid to have you talk so much. It will exhaust you, Henry. A quiet night is everything for you."

"I suppose I ought to stop, for your sake," said Henry, after Mrs. French had left. "I forgot about your journey. But I want you to be a whole-hearted Christian, Hugh. Father was one. Mother was one. God has separated us here, but if we love and serve him, he will let us all meet together again, in heaven."

At eight o'clock, I was on my way back to Mr. Otis's.

Henry lingered until the early spring, when, with the setting sun of one soft April day, he fell asleep in Jesus.

His death was a great shock to me. Mrs. Otis tried to comfort me. Comfort there indeed was in his death, for it was all well with him. He had gone home to his Saviour, but my heart panted after him. "Henry, dear Henry! shall I never see you again here?" I often asked, in the hour of grief. Then I tried to think how God does all things well; and that without father, mother, or brother, I must try to love my heavenly Father and my dear Saviour more and better.



CHAPTER VIII.

COLLEGE SCENES.



SO far had I progressed in the fulfilment of long-cherished hopes, that I had reached college, where new scenes awaited me. My preparatory course had been finished at the Lion Academy, remaining under the friendly roof of Mr. Otis. After leaving the academy I taught a school for a year, in order to furnish me with funds wherewith to provide myself a suitable wardrobe and books, and to help to carry me on during the first college year. It must be remembered that my chief, and indeed sole reliance, was to be on my own exertions, which had to be severely tasked to keep up even with my necessary wants—there was certainly no room for imaginary ones.

Behold me at college! I boarded in commons, or at a common table with the other students. Chance, as it were, had thrown in my way a young man about my own age, whose pleasing manners favourably im-

pressed me. He, like myself, was a stranger to everybody. After a little talk about our mutual plans and wishes, we concluded to take a room together, and, after the proper preliminaries, we took possession of one of the small rooms assigned to the students. His name was William Burr. For a time we both prosecuted our studies with equal interest and ardour, until toward the middle of the second term, when his ardour began to cool, and his books were often abandoned for the company of a certain class of idle collegians, who, I suppose, are to be found within the precincts of every college—preferring to do almost anything rather than to study, and from whose disorderly ranks issue those disturbances and outbreaks which cause grief and anxiety to the tutors and professors, sadly disturbing the harmony of college duties, and often bringing discredit and even guilt upon themselves, as well as sorrow and suffering on their friends.

Many of these young men, I am sorry to say, were from rich and influential families, which gave them a certain standing among others of lesser note; their purses and their names possessing a rank which their conduct certainly belied.

I began to speak to Burr—first to warn, and at last to remonstrate with him—about his increasing neglect of his studies. He allowed the truth of all I had to say. Indeed, when we first became ac-

quainted, no one seemed to have more just views than he had as to the manner in which a college life should be spent. He knew the right, and yet it became evident, in his case as well as in multitudes of others, he still pursued the wrong. He never attempted to excuse or confirm himself by arguments, but usually warded off the point of my remarks in a tone of pleasantry, or with some joke or jest that often provoked a smile in spite of the severe decisions of duty and reason. For a long time I could not find out how he employed himself in his long absences from our room.

"Where now, Burr?" I used frequently to ask, on his getting up to go out.

"To Tom Tracy's," was the most frequent reply. Tom Tracy's opinions, sayings, and doings were often quoted and repeated, until it seemed that Tom Tracy was his chief authority. Tom Tracy was of the lowest standing in the junior class.

Tom Tracy was a handsome youth of eighteen or thereabouts, with a dark, restless, searching eye, and a head and forehead which bespoke fine faculties. He was the son of General Tracy, a well-known and highly-honoured man. I remember I often looked at him, and wondered, if he had a mother or brothers or sisters watching his career with loving and anxious eyes, how they felt about him, and how he treated their love and sympathy! It had always seemed to

me, if anything short of the power of the Holy Spirit could restrain the irregularities and temper the passions of a young man, it would be the memory of home—home! The memory of the home of my childhood used to kindle my heart. Oh, had I then a home! A home to think of, to return to, to have cheering letters from! I almost envied boys who had homes. Ah! they knew not how to appreciate them as I did, for they had not been homeless.

There were several of the pious students, who for some time had been in the habit of holding a little prayer-meeting at the room of one Griffith, who was boarding in the village. I had the privilege of being among that number, although as yet belonging to no Church by the outward covenant; but my views I never concealed. I hoped I loved the Lord Jesus, and I was not ashamed of owning before any one the allegiance which it was the desire of my life to pay to him. This little prayer-meeting in Griffith's room was a comfort and strengthener to me. It brought me into intimate intercourse with some young men whose daily lives adorned their Christian profession; and, indeed, this was the first time I had ever found companions of like sentiments and principles.

One evening, Burr and I were both getting ready to go out at the same time. "Where are you bound for?" asked Burr.

"To a prayer-meeting," was my reply.

"And I to the card-table; one is the broad road, and the other is the narrow way," said Burr, half serious and half in jest.

"Do you consider where each leads?" I asked seriously.

"I suppose I do—my mother has told me often enough," he answered, with a harshness of manner which I had not before noticed.

"And are not your mother's instructions worth minding?" I said.

"By-and-by," he answered, after a short pause, as he stooped down to tie his shoe. "I would not for the world have her know what I do here; but I am in with Tom Tracy, and cannot very well get out. By-and-by I mean to mend my ways. Tom Tracy will not always be here. He is two years before us, you know; but he is such a capital fellow."

I had so often spoken to Burr before without availing anything, that I said no more; and we both went on our own chosen ways—he to the card-table, I to the prayer-meeting. As the season advanced, there was evidently a quickening of religious emotions among some of the professors and the pious students. An old Saturday prayer-meeting, in which professors, students, and the village Christians mingled together, and which for some time past had had only a name to live, became more fully attended, and pious desires were evidently beginning to be awakened in many a

heart. The language of confession and contrition fell from the lips of many a one old in the service of the Saviour, and the state of impenitent sinners around them began to burden their souls and arouse their Christian love. The Spirit of God came down upon his people, and they seemed of one heart and one mind. It was precious to my own soul, for a like season I had never passed through. The professors exhorted the pious students to be true and faithful to their companions; and the work of the Lord was entered upon with cheerful alacrity. Prayer-meetings were also held in different rooms. A deep and holy solemnity rested upon the faces of God's people. The Holy Ghost was present in his renewing and sanctifying power. Many a young man was arrested in his thoughtless career or his ambitious hopes, and induced to pause and think of eternal realities, of heaven and hell, and of the judgment to come.

"What shall I do to be saved?" burst from many a burdened heart. How was the tone of almost everything about the college enclosures changed! There was a deep stillness throughout the halls. The noise of thoughtless mirth was hushed. There were anxious inquiries and serious faces, as if business of unspeakable importance were going on. Ah, yes! business of unspeakable importance it certainly was. God was calling the young men of that college to come to him!

"Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" said the

voice. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

At that period, business was being transacted for eternity; life and death hung, it may be, on the decision of a moment.

How my heart yearned for my room-mate, William Burr! He was the son of pious parents; he had had at times deep religious convictions; he knew his duty. I soon found he contrived to be with me as little as possible. He evaded the remotest allusion to the subject of religion; and although he never seemed angry when I urged it upon his attention, he listened with a calm and cold indifference that I felt to the quick. A small meeting of the students in our building was one evening to be held at our room.

"Burr," I said, grasping his hand as he was leaving the supper-table, "one moment;" and I arose and walked down the hall with him. We went together to our apartment. "A little prayer-meeting will be held in our room to-night, if you have no objection."

"Objection! no, not the least."

"Will you not be present, Burr?" I asked tenderly, for I felt deeply for him. Oh, I thought of his mother. "Friends only will be there—your true friends, Burr; not those who would lead you astray. You will stay, will you not, Burr?"

"I have a previous engagement," was his reply, at

the same time making an effort to disengage his arm from mine.

"Of more importance than the interests of your soul?" I asked. "God's Spirit is hovering over the college. His invitations of mercy are sounding in our ears. His people are praying and labouring to bring souls into the kingdom of the Redeemer. Will you not, while everything conspires to fix the attention upon eternal realities, think of your soul's true interests?" I said earnestly. "O Burr, this is no time for dallying or trifling. 'Call upon God while he is near; seek him while he may be found.' These are Divine warnings. Does it not seem, then, as if there were times when he is especially near to us, and others when he keeps himself a great way off?"

He stopped a moment, as if listening; at last he said, with his eyes cast upon the floor, "Yes, Fisher, I believe all these things as much as you do. I was brought up in them; but"—he hesitated—"but I have an engagement this evening. Some other time, perhaps—it ought to be attended to some time—but not now. I promised Tom Tracy." And in an instant he slipped from my side and was gone!

Though he could refuse to join us, he could not prevent our bearing him on our hearts at the throne of mercy. Every one who knew Burr liked him, and every one who had his interests truly at heart regretted his intimacy with Tom Tracy. Burr was

remembered in our little meeting, and his case was the burden of many an earnest petition. The next morning at prayers, Professor L—— made a most solemn and affecting appeal to the young men, beseeching them to give earnest heed to those things which related to their salvation.

"This is the forming period of your character," said he; "it may be the great crisis in your souls' history. You are now called upon to repent, to abandon your sins, to begin a life of holy obedience to God, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." He then showed how absorbing were the interests of manhood, and how the cares of life would crowd upon our attention, if our lives were spared, estranging us further and further from heaven and holy things; and closed in a most impressive manner with these words of the preacher: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou," he said emphatically, "that for all these things *God will bring thee into judgment*" (Eccles. xi. 9).

My own heart trembled, and I looked to see how Burr appeared. His eye was intently fixed on the professor; then he covered his eyes with his hand, and leaned his elbow upon the desk. There was deep thoughtfulness in his movements.

"An arrow of conviction has struck his heart," I

thought to myself, offering up a silent prayer to God in his behalf.

After that, we dispersed to our several duties. My heart was with Burr all that day; and every time we met I saw that his mind was ill at ease. On returning to my room in the afternoon, it was evident he had just occupied it, and I found Alleine's "Alarm" open upon his desk. He did not appear at supper. "Where is Burr?" I asked myself and others. No one seemed to know. I went on my way to visit a young man whose room was in another part of the college, who evidently felt a deep sense of his guilt before God. Burr was constantly on my mind; nor had I gone far, before a quick step approached me from behind, and Burr was at my side.

"Burr," I exclaimed cordially, "I am so glad to see you! You were not at supper."

"No," he answered—"no; I was not at supper."

"How are you to-day?" I inquired, hardly knowing what to say, and yet wanting to say something.

"I cannot tell," he replied sadly. "There is a strange conflict within. I feel as Paul says: 'The things that I would, I do not; and the things that I would not, those I do.' You see I know Scripture."

Ah, how critical was his position! The Spirit of God striving with him, and he, I fear, resisting! I spoke earnestly with him, and we almost stopped in the street as we talked.

"Yes, yes; it is all so," he said; "and I have had many thoughts about accepting the professor's invitation to his room, for all who are inquiring about a better life; but—"

I urged his going with all the eloquence I was master of. Just then a low whistle was heard on the still night-air. Burr started. I looked around and saw, in the shadow of one of the college buildings, a figure wrapped in a large cloak; nor could I fail to discern, by the clear moonlight, that it was Tom Tracy.

"I must go!" said Burr excitedly.

"Yes—with me—to the professor's!" And taking him by the arm, I would gladly have hurried him away from this dangerous vicinity.

He shook his head, and disengaged himself.

"Do go with me!" I exclaimed.

"No, Fisher," he replied deliberately; "I must go my way this time: a more convenient season will soon come, and I will go with you then."

He joined Tracy, and they went off together.

Ah! what a fatal decision! From that night he became an opposer of the gospel. He had resisted the gracious pleadings of the Spirit of God, and was left to his own weak, deceitful, sin-defiled heart. He became sour, bitter, and angry against every movement or wish to lead him to seek his true interests.

William Burr would not resist the evil influences

of wicked companions, and he was left to abide the consequences. The next winter there were riots and disturbances at college, when he, with Tracy and some others, left, never more to return. It was a great grief and terrible disappointment to his poor mother. After idling at home for some time, he shipped for sea, and was never heard of more.

Many years have passed since then, and I have seen the beginning and the ending of many a young man. I have been greatly prospered in the world, while many have fallen by my side, but I have never seen the time when I could safely act upon any other principles than those in which my pious mother instructed me. They brought me safely through the temptations of boyhood, the dangers of youth, and the corrupting influences that cling around the paths of manhood. And what I want to say to everybody is this: When you leave your God-fearing mother and your Christian home, carry away with you the principles and habits that you have been brought up in. Do not leave them behind, on any account; they are your only safety in a corrupt and irreligious world. Act upon them; do not be ashamed or afraid of them.

Continue the habit of prayer which, as a child, you were taught at your mother's knee. If you needed to pray while a child—if you have sins to be forgiven,

mercy to crave, and strength to ask, while you are at home—much, very much more will you need to pray for them when you are away from home, amid strangers and temptations.

Revere the Sabbath-day at all risks, and keep it holy. God has commanded it, and you should stand steadfastly by God's testimony. You will never be the worse for it, however much temporary inconvenience you may suffer. Do not be ashamed or frightened by any sneering speeches or foolish laughter. God will keep and help those who trust in him: they shall rest securely under the shadow of his wings.

Never fear to speak the truth. Honesty is always the best policy; for God will bring every secret thing to light, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Be true to a high standard—even that of the Word of God—and do not smother your conscientious scruples to please anybody. You must act for yourself. Nobody can shield you at the bar of conscience or the bar of God. If you sell your conscience to another on earth, and excuse yourself for doing a wrong thing because you are the clerk, or the servant, or the instrument of another, that man cannot save your soul from the consequences of wrong-doing. They will be visited upon yourself, and you alone must bear them.

Above all, keep your heart ever open to the gracious visits of the Holy Spirit.

Do you remember what the Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples, just before he was crucified, about this Spirit? I will tell you. "If ye love me," he said, "keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 15–17, 26).

You see he is the Spirit of truth—the Comforter. He will teach us our duty; he will bring Christ's words to our mind; he will not let us forget—for forgetting our duty, forgetting God's requirements, is one of our most easily besetting sins. Oh what a blessed thing it is that the Holy Spirit has a part in the great plan of our redemption! Above all, then, let me repeat, keep your hearts open to the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, when God revives his work among his people, the Holy Spirit is especially near, solemnizing the hearts of the impenitent and unthinking, and quickening those who love the Lord Jesus. Then, O young man, resist him not! Grieve him not, because he comes to stop

you in the way of sin—to open the door of your heart for your Saviour to enter. Do you know that it is recorded in Holy Scripture that "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men? And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." And why this dreadful sentence? Because, if you resist the Spirit of grace, and quench his strivings in your heart, you hinder Christ's entrance. There will be no seriousness, no conviction, no penitence, no self-abasement, no desire for pardon, nor prayer for mercy.

Consider what I have told you, and keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

The Successful Merchant.

HOME!—what a volume is contained in that single word! Ask the exile what it means, and his tears will tell more eloquently than words. Ask the wandering boy who has none to care for him, or is cared for only by his oppressor; or ask the prodigal who has hurried away from his father's house to sin, and his quivering lip or his averted visage will proclaim the spell and the attractions of home. Necessity may compel us

> "To mould the heart anew—to take the stamp
> Of foreign friendships in a foreign land,
> And learn to love the music of strange tongues;"

but still there is a corner in the heart reserved for home—sacred, inviolable, and sealed against intrusion as with the signet of a king.

And yet there are scenes sometimes connected with

home which might rather invest it with gloom, or urge the sensitive to shun it. Death has crossed its threshold—he is silently and unsuspectedly doing his work. One of that household—perhaps the mother—is stretched upon a sick-bed; slowly and reluctantly the impression creeps over the mind that it may at last prove to be a death-bed. Hopes long cherished, like flickering tapers, die, and at last the mother herself dies. She had gathered her little ones round her dying bed, to give them a mother's warning, to add a mother's blessing, and then to fall asleep. And what of home now? Is it not indeed the valley of Achor? Is not the silence which reigns there, or the wail which alone breaks the silence, enough to dissipate the spell which binds us to home, and convince us that even it too soon becomes an asylum for mourners, instead of an abode of the happy?

Yet the truth which Jesus brought from heaven to earth can shed radiance even upon the dwellings of sorrow; and we are now to glance at the character of one who well understood that fact—whose early home was one of privations, but who learned from the Teacher sent by God how to illumine the darkness, and how to dry men's tears. He was one of Britain's merchant princes; and it were difficult to say whether the profusion with which he sowed, or the luxuriance which he reaped, was the more remarkable.

Samuel Budgett was the son of poor but pious parents, who lived at Warrington, the birth-place of John Locke. He was born in the year 1794; and, happily for him, grace and truth were valued where he first saw the light. His parents, though poor, possessed the pearl of great price; and they early taught their boy to fear and worship Him from whom our blessings come. His mother in particular was devout, and her influence was largely blessed to mould the character of her son. When about nine years of age, the boy, in passing his mother's door, heard her earnestly praying for himself by name. The thought occurred—"My mother is more earnest that I should be saved than I am for my own salvation;" and his biographer tells that from that hour Samuel Budgett became decided to serve his God. That impression never was effaced, for the religious convictions which were thus produced deepened and gathered strength; and when he heard of the happy death of a poor woman, which happened about that period, the boy "felt an ardent desire to lie down and die by her side." Other incidents operated in the same direction,—even the fall of the leaf had a salutary effect on his meditative mind; how much more when the mother whom he loved seemed drawing near to death! The youth was despatched for a physician; and, as he returned from his melancholy errand, his prayers were urgent that his parent

might be spared. Nor did he pray in vain on that dark winter morning. The God who hears the young ravens when they cry, heard and answered young Budgett; and whatever was the cause, he returned to his sick mother's cottage fully assured that she would be restored. Nor was he disappointed. And it was not wonderful though that mother, after her recovery, had reason to say,—"I have been profited and humbled by Samuel's conversation. Although young in years, he is a companion for age as well as for youth."

Samuel Budgett once found a horse's shoe, for which he received a penny. A friend doubled it by giving him another penny for removing some rubbish, with the promise of a third if the second, which he marked for that purpose, were kept for a fortnight. It was kept, and the child became the owner of threepence. That store slowly increased to some shillings, and the whole was invested in a copy of Wesley's Hymns, with which he felt himself to be a rich and a happy boy. When only a child, he would sometimes burst into tears in church; and on one occasion so deep was his emotion, that he had to be carried out to be soothed. Watts' hymns for children were the first to awaken his fondness for devotional poetry, and he loved them ever after with the force of a strong passion.

Thus trained, young Budgett became at length an

apprentice boy at Kingswood, near Bristol, famed for the moral wonders wrought among its colliers by the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield; and how different would the condition of apprentices be were their conduct in general like that of Budgett—how happy, how honoured, how rich might they become! As statedly as the Sabbath returned, he repaired to his place of worship, thirsting for the water and hungering for the bread of life. A sermon, we are told, was to him a repast, a banquet, a festival; and often after he had heard one, he put his fingers to his ears to prevent the entrance of any distracting or disturbing idea, while he hastened to the solitude of an old quarry, there to meditate on what he had heard. That was his study—his place where prayer was wont to be made. There he sowed both for time and eternity, and we shall hereafter see how abundant was the harvest which he reaped. In taking heed how he heard, he was growing rich towards God, and learning how powerful is the word of Him who said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

But Budgett traded with his spiritual talent. When an apprentice boy, he became a Sabbath-school teacher, and continued to be so till the close of his career. The hours thus spent he reckoned among the most happy of his life; and we need not wonder,

therefore, to learn that oftener than once, in common with a great cloud of Sabbath-school teachers, he contemplated going far hence to the heathen, to tell them of the Saviour whom he loved and had felt to be precious. When deciding what should be his path in life, he was in a great strait, he says, between two courses—business in the world, or entire consecration, directly and by designation, to the service of his Redeemer. On this subject he on one occasion wept till the point of his saddle and the shoulders of the horse were wet with his tears; and he abandoned the thought of becoming a missionary only from the feeling that he had not received a sufficient education, and could not overcome his reluctance to open his mind to any who could have helped him on his way.

Nor were these mere emotions, passing away like the morning cloud. On the contrary, they embodied themselves in substantial actions; for Budgett early learned to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Early in life he somehow became possessed of fifteen shillings. His sisters needed coals—he invested his entire fortune in that article, and sent the supply to his sisters. His parents on one occasion were in straits; Samuel was then in possession of thirty pounds, and the whole was handed over to relieve them from their difficulty. On another occasion, when an elder brother, who had not been a very kind brother to Samuel, was in difficulty in business, the

latter gave him all that he possessed in the world—one hundred pounds—to extricate his brother and uphold his credit. These, and instances such as these, make it plain that Samuel Budgett was not merely a hearer, but also a doer of the Word; and he was blessed in his deeds. He had, in truth, become a benefactor to not a few while only an apprentice lad; he was sowing abundantly, and it remains to be seen how abundantly he reaped. He had thrice given his all away,—did he lend it to the Lord, or was it only another instance of indiscriminate profusion?

In other words, how did Budgett reap? In a way the most remarkable that ever fell to the lot of man.

We have seen that even when he was comparatively poor himself, he gave to others with a profusion which appears lavish and extreme. But though he scattered, he increased. Some accounts report that he gave away £2,000 every year in charity. In one week he gave away £60, while the value of the property which passed through his hands as a merchant, amounted for a single year to about £750,000. He built a spacious school-house for the poor near his home; he founded libraries—he actually made the poor rich. In short, he gave away, in the service of Him to whom his all belonged, a sixth part of his income, and that upon a formal and deliberate calculation of what his duty was.

Again: we have seen that, when an apprentice boy, Budgett made an old quarry his study, and there meditated on the sermons which he had heard; such was a portion of his work during seed-time, and when harvest came he found that quarry his own by purchase. He filled it up; and over the spot stood his mansion, surrounded by acres of garden, and lawn, and field, interspersed with flowers and fountains, and arbours of weeping ash, and all that could betoken elegance linked hand in hand with plenty. The apprentice boy, guided by the godliness which his mother taught him from the Bible, and blessed by the Father of lights, has become the lord of that manor. His lines have fallen in pleasant places. Like David, "he went on and grew great, and the Lord of hosts was with him;" or, like Joseph, "he was a prosperous man," for the self-same reason.

Again: it was the practice of Budgett in early life to look to God for a blessing upon all that he undertook. He expected no success without that; for he thoroughly understood that, unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. And as he proceeded in that spirit while sowing, in reaping he gathered in full sheaves into his bosom. "Never have I witnessed," said one concerning him, "such a remarkable instance of a firm of mercantile men being guided by the Saviour's injunction—'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,

and all these things shall be added unto you.'" And we have already seen that such were the additions made to him, that the annual value of the goods bought and sold by one who began with a penny, amounted to £750,000!

Further: of Budgett's youth we read, that "his thirst for the means of grace was strong and steady; his Bible was beloved; his Sabbath was a day of eager hearing, eager reading, eager meditating, and eventually a day of ardent teaching and visiting; his hymn-book was passing almost entire into his memory; and his path of filial duty was trodden with self-forgetting constancy. Inside all this was a warm delight in God—a gratitude—a love—a filial fear."

And while that was the character of his boyhood and youth, what was his character in maturer years? For an answer, we observe, that in his vast premises in Bristol, the visitor was led to one large room which contained no merchandise, and had no air of business about it. A long range of forms, and a table at the head, formed its only furniture. But on that table lay Fletcher's Family Devotions, and Wesley's Hymns. It was the chapel of the establishment; and there the men assembled every day for half an hour after breakfast, to praise that God who gives power to get wealth, and from whom all blessings flow. Now, that was a beautiful example of that rare combination, "diligent in business.....serving

the Lord." Will many of our youth follow the example of Budgett? Then they may not, perhaps, arrive at his wealth, but they will assuredly understand, in their blissful experience, that "better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and strife." Youth may be—it *is*—the season of joy, but it is also the season of sowing. The growth will be stinted at the best, or if it be luxuriant, it will be the luxuriance of noxious weeds, unless the Sun of Righteousness be sought to expand the bud into blossom, and fruit, and mellow richness at the last.

But we have not yet exhausted the story of the life of Budgett. Once each year, at least, a balance was struck, that he might know his profits or his loss; and as soon as that operation was over, he and his partner retired into an inner office, knelt down before the Lord of all, acknowledged his goodness in the increase granted, or his correcting hand in the loss. Now, was his business less likely to prosper because he recognized the Sovereign Proprietor? Nay, is not property only a name—a mirage—a lure to ruin for ever, when the Supreme Proprietor is not recognized? The curse of unsanctified prosperity ranks among the heaviest of all.

But the time came when Samuel Budgett must die. He had had trials before that period, in the death of some whom he loved, but he himself must now away to the City of the Skies; and what was the

manner of his departure? He was profoundly abased at the thought of his shortcoming—outgushing grief for ingratitude and prayers of piteous abasement, we read, signalized his closing days. Yet withal there was joy, a foretaste of the joy that is unspeakable. When he saw his disease making progress, he said, "It will only hasten me home the sooner." "Mind, I am a sinner saved by grace—a brand plucked from the burning," was one of his expressions. "I sent for you," he said to a friend, "to tell you how happy I am; not a wave—not a ripple—not a fear—not a shadow of a doubt. I did not think it was possible for man to enjoy so much of God on the earth—*I am filled with God.*" "I have not a paper to sign, not a shilling to give away, not a book but any one may comprehend in ten minutes." "I this day hang like a little child in a brook catching hold of a branch that is thrown out to save it; only there is one difference in my case,—I hang on the Branch of Jesse's stem. Christ will keep me, and I am safe." "I would not alter my lot, if it were in my power to do so, for any earthly advantage. The blood of Christ is all to me. I hang upon the atonement." "I do not feel myself like a sick man; I feel I am luxuriating in God's presence." "Could I live like an archangel, still I could not merit heaven." "I like to hear of the beauties of heaven, but I do not dwell upon them. No; what I rejoice in is, that *Christ will be*

there." Such were some of this merchant prince's closing remarks; such the harvest of hope, nay, of fruition, which he reaped even here. The field was white unto the harvest, and his soul was satisfied to the full with the abundance which was there.

Now, whether would the young reap as this man did, or as the man who amasses more than he can count, and yet forgets God amid it all?

Whether would the young live as this man lived, and die as this man died—fearing and serving God; or live and die as they do who say to the gold, Thou art my god; and to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence?

Whether would the young learn to give to the poor, and so lend to the Lord; or grasp all they can, and hoard all they grasp—ungenerous in heart, unfeeling, selfish, unlovely, and unloved?

Alfred Singleton; or, Love the Truth.

ALFRED SINGLETON, the son of a country minister, was what the world calls a *good* boy; but his watchful parents saw that he had many faults to correct, and many sins to repent of, before he could be called *good* by his Father in heaven. He had one fault—a very great one—that caused his friends much sorrow and anxiety: he did not love the truth as he ought. I do not mean that he was in the habit of telling lies, but he was apt to forget and equivocate; and when he was telling anything, he would add a little, or take away a little, and not keep close to the truth.

Do all my young readers know what I mean by this word *truth?* Some of them will smile at this question, and say, *everybody knows that;* but I hope others will stop and think whether they know what truth

is,—that holy truth that God loves, and which every little child loves when he begins to grow like God.

You have often read the story of Ananias and Sapphira, and often answered the question, "Who were struck dead for lying?" but you do not see people struck dead now, and perhaps you think the sin of lying is not so displeasing to God as it once was; but you are mistaken. He is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity," and he is the God of truth. It is true, perhaps, that people are not now *struck dead*, as they once were, in the act of sinning; still they bring upon themselves the displeasure of God; and if his "*loving-kindness* is better than *life*," then surely his anger is *worse* than *death*.

Those who knew Alfred slightly did not notice this habit, and often thought him very witty and amusing, and by their smiles and praises encouraged him in a sinful way. This gave his real friends much pain. He was warned faithfully of the sin of departing from the truth about the merest trifle. His father prayed for him and with him, that he might have strength to resist temptation, and love the truth from his heart. And Alfred would pray also; but he did not *watch* as well as pray, and so he gained no conquest over his fault.

And now, while speaking of the duty of *watching*, I will tell you a beautiful anecdote that I heard from the lips of a minister not long ago.

He said, that when he was a boy, he knew an old negro man who lived a little way out of the city. He used often to go and see him, and carry him presents from his parents. Old Peter was poor in this world's goods, and lived in a miserable little hovel; but he was always cheerful, and said he was as rich and happy as a king. Old Peter was a Christian.

When this little boy grew up, and determined to be a minister, and before he left home to prepare himself, by a course of study, to preach, he went to bid his old friend good-bye. Peter was very glad to see him, and they had a long conversation together. When he arose to go, Peter said—"And so, master, you are going away to learn to be a minister?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Well," said Peter, "I have but *three* words to say to you, and they are my Master's words—*Watch and pray!*

"Of course, it will be of no use to *watch* without praying; and if you pray ever so much, and *do not watch*, the devil will have you, after all; but *watch and pray*, and then your heart will be guarded by a two-edged sword, turning each way, and the devil cannot get in."

Now Alfred did not *watch*, and the devil, who is the father of lies, often tempted him to turn aside from the straight and narrow way of truth. He knew it was wrong, for he was the child of Christian

parents, and had been taught from his cradle that he must speak the truth *always*.

One day he read the following story, and it made him quite serious for a time. It is a true story, and told by one who is now a minister of the gospel.

"I had one of the kindest and best of fathers; and when I was a little white-headed boy, about six years old, he used to carry me to school before him on his horse. He helped me in my little plans, and was always trying to make me happy; and he never seemed so happy himself as when making me happy. When I was six years old, he came home one day very sick. My mother too was sick, and thus nobody but my two sisters could take care of my father.

"In a few days my father was worse; then he became very sick indeed, and all the physicians in the neighbourhood were called to see him. The next Sabbath morning, as I went into the room, he stretched out his hand to me, and said, 'My little boy, I am very sick. I wish you to take that paper on the stand, and run down to Mr. C——'s and get me the medicine written on that paper.'

"I took the paper, and went to the apothecary's shop, as I had often done before. It was about half a mile off; but when I got there, I found it shut, and as Mr. C—— lived a quarter of a mile further off, I concluded not to go and find him. I then set

out for home. On my way back I contrived what to say. I knew how wicked it was to tell a lie, but one sin always leads to another.

"On going in to my father, I saw that he was in great pain; and though pale and weak, I could see great drops of sweat standing on his forehead, forced out by the pain. Oh, then I was sorry I had not gone and found the apothecary. At length he said to me, 'My son has got the medicine, I hope; for I am in great pain.'

"I hung my head and muttered, for my conscience troubled me, 'No, sir; Mr. C—— says he has got none.'

"'Has got none! Is this possible?' He looked earnestly upon me, and seeing my head hung down, and probably suspecting my falsehood, he said, in the mildest, kindest tone, '*My little boy will see his father suffer great pain for want of the medicine.*'

"I went out of the room and cried. I was soon called back. My brothers had come, and were standing round his bed, and he was committing my poor mother to their care, and giving them his last advice. I was the youngest, and when he laid his hand on my head, and told me that in 'a few hours I should have no father; that he would in a day or two be buried; that I must now make God my Father, love him, obey him, and always do right and *speak the truth*, because the eye of God is always upon me,' it

seemed as if I should sink; and when he laid his hand on my head again, and prayed for the blessing of God the Redeemer to rest upon me, 'soon to be a fatherless child,' I dared not look at him, I felt so guilty.

"Sobbing, I rushed from his bedside, and wished I could die. They soon told me he could not speak. Oh, how much I would have given to go in, and tell him that I had told a lie, and ask him once more to lay his hand on my head and forgive me!

"I crept into the room, and heard the minister pray for the 'dying man.' Oh, how my heart ached! I caught up my hat, and ran to the apothecary's house, and got the medicine. I ran home with all my might; went in, and hastened up to my father's bedside to confess my sin, crying out, 'Oh, here, father—' But I was hushed; and then I saw that he was pale, and that all in the room were weeping. *My dear father was dead!* and the last time I ever spoke to him was *to tell a lie!* I sobbed as if my heart would break, for his kindnesses, his tender looks, and my own sin, all rushed upon my mind.

"As I gazed upon his cold, pale face, and saw his eyes shut and his lips closed, could I help thinking of his words, '*My little boy will see his father suffer great pain for want of that medicine*'? I could not know but he died for the want of it. In a day or two he was put into the ground. There were several

ministers at the funeral, and each spoke kindly to me, but none could comfort me.

"My father was buried, and the children were all scattered abroad; for my mother was too feeble to take care of them.

"It was twelve years after this, while in college, that I went alone to the grave of my father. It took me a good while to find it; but there it was, with its humble tombstone; and as I stood over it, I seemed to go back to his bedside, to see his pale face and hear his voice. Oh! the thought of that great wickedness cut me to the heart. It seemed as if worlds would not be too much to give, could I then only have *called loud enough* to have him hear me ask his forgiveness. But it was too late. He had been in the grave twelve years, and I must live and die weeping over that ungrateful falsehood. May God forgive me."

Alfred was much affected by this story. "How dreadful," he thought, "to have such a sin to think of after a parent is dead! I never will tell a lie to my father, for I never could forgive myself if he should die." Alfred forgot that the boy sinned against God as well as his father. He was too confident, also. He trusted in himself; and how weak are resolutions not founded in better strength than our own!

Once Alfred entirely forgot that he had a grammar

lesson to learn on Saturday evening. He was an ambitious boy and an excellent scholar, and his lessons were always learned promptly and well. He had now held a high rank in school for several months, and to lose it before the next examination would be a source of much pain and mortification. Monday morning came, and he *then* remembered that his lesson was unstudied. His class was called up to recite—Alfred was unprepared.

"Unless you have a good excuse, Master Singleton," said the teacher, "you know the rules—you lose your rank for the month."

"I was not well, sir, on Saturday evening, and could not sit up to study my lesson."

"Very well," said Mr. Palmer; "you are excused."

Alfred was excused to his master, and retained his place in school; but he had committed a sin for which he could not excuse himself. He returned to his seat; was very diligent about his other studies, wrote with neatness, and did his sums with accuracy; but the approbation of his master did not give him the usual pleasure. He knew that God could not say *very well* to him. He felt that he deserved censure, and praise only made him more unhappy.

Thus it is that God mercifully orders that these great sins shall bring punishment with them; for unless a sinner is sadly hardened, the voice of

conscience will make him more miserable than the blame of others, that he so much dreads.

Everything was pleasant at home for Alfred. Mr. Singleton gave his children a most interesting account of his travels, and described to them the beautiful country through which he had passed, and the many new and curious things he had seen in the cities which he had visited. But Alfred did not feel right, and something prevented him from enjoying his father's society as usual. What was that something? It was the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God, saying to him, "*You have told a lie.*"

When Alfred went to bed at night, he could not sleep. After lying awake some time, he got up and looked out of the window, and tried to forget his trouble. His mother, whose chamber was next his, immediately got up, and came in to see what was the matter.

"Oh, nothing, mother," he said; "I do not feel very well, and was a little restless; but I will try to go to sleep, and I dare say I shall be better in the morning."

Mrs. Singleton went back, telling Alfred not to fail to call her if he felt any worse.

Here was Alfred's *second* falsehood, proceeding entirely from his first departure from the truth. He tried to excuse it to himself by the reflection that all he had said was true, for he certainly did not feel

well; but there was an *intention to deceive,* and the sin is in *that,* not in the *words.*

At breakfast, the next morning, his father kindly asked him how he was, and expressed his gratification at seeing him look so well. Alfred felt very much ashamed, and half resolved to tell the whole truth at once; but false pride kept him back. He could not bear to let his father know that he had stooped to tell such a mean and pitiful lie. He hurried off to school, for the first time glad to escape from the kind words and looks of his indulgent parents.

The next afternoon, as Alfred was leaving school, Mr. Palmer said to him—"I have not seen your father since his return, Alfred; I will try to call this evening, if you think he will be at home."

Alfred hesitated. He did not wish Mr. Palmer to see his father, for he feared he might, in speaking of his arrival on Saturday evening, say something that would expose his first falsehood. How timid the sin of lying makes a boy! What does Alfred do? Again he breaks the command of God! Again he resorts to a lie! He told Mr. Palmer that his father was engaged, and would not be at home in the evening. Mr. Palmer then said he would take another opportunity to call.

Here was Alfred's *third* lie! But four days had passed since he told the first direct falsehood that passed his lips; and now, how wide the door of sin

has opened! Truly has it been said by a Christian writer—"Let a child tell *one* lie, and he may thus begin a course of lying which will ruin him for this life and the next. A good man, speaking of his dear child then in the grave, says, 'When he was about three years old, an aged female, at whose house he was staying for a day, informed me that William had told a falsehood. I was thunderstruck and almost distracted; for the information seemed to blast my most cherished hopes. *I am not sure that my agony on hearing of his death was much more intense, than that which I then endured from an apprehension of his guilt.*'

"You see how a good father abhors a single lie. Guard, then, my beloved children, against the FIRST lie. Do not allow yourselves to *think* a lie. If you sometimes think that you can make a good story, or get yourself out of a difficulty, by departing a *little* from the truth, drive away the wicked suggestion, and go by yourself, and pray that the '*thought of your heart* may be forgiven.'"

You see how Alfred's first lie seemed to make it *necessary* for him to tell two more; and we know not how far in the career of sin it might have carried him, if God had not mercifully checked him.

A few evenings after, Mr. Palmer called to see Mr. Singleton, and was happy to find him at home, surrounded by his family. Mr. Palmer was always a welcome guest. He was an excellent man, and a

Christian teacher. He remembered that his pupils had *hearts* as well as *heads*, and that those hearts, as the "fountains of life," must be "kept with all diligence."

Mr. Palmer was very fond of Alfred and Edward Singleton. They were attentive and obedient scholars, and amiable and obliging friends. After they had retired, their teacher spoke of them, with much praise, to their parents, and expressed a hope that their conduct at home met equally the approbation of their friends.

When Mr. Palmer rose to go, he apologized for not having called to see his minister before. "I have been engaged every evening since you arrived," said he, "except Tuesday, and you know my school engrosses the hours of the day."

"I wish you had called on Tuesday evening," said Mr. Singleton; "Mr. S—— was here, and I should have been glad to have introduced you to him."

"I spoke of coming, but Alfred said you were engaged, and I therefore put it off. But, good-night. I hope to call and see you often, now you are once more among us."

"I am afraid this is one of Alfred's wicked deeds," said Mr. Singleton to his wife, after Mr. Palmer had gone.

"I do not understand it," replied Mrs. Singleton; "but I hope it can be explained. Perhaps Mr. Palmer misunderstood Alfred."

The next morning, at breakfast, Mr. Singleton said, "Do you know, Alfred, why Mr. Palmer has not called upon me before last evening? He is usually among the first of my friends to call upon me after an absence from home."

The blood rose in Alfred's cheeks, and he hesitated. Would another falsehood save him? He was tempted to say "he did not know;" but when he lookod up, and met the searching eye of his father, he could not speak. He feared the eye of his earthly parent, but that of God had been disregarded—that all-seeing eye that is never closed, and to which the darkness and the light are both alike!

Mr. Singleton took him by the hand, and led him to his study. He there knelt with him, and asked the Lord to give him strength to explain this matter frankly and fully. "And now, my son, what is this you have done?" he said affectionately. "Your blushes and confusion lead me to think there has been something wrong, and yet I cannot see what motive you can have had to deceive me. Recollect that you stand now in the presence of the God of truth, and that he cannot be deceived. If you have done wrong, confess it; do not increase the sin by concealing anything."

Alfred burst into a flood of tears. "Oh, father, you do not suspect all; I cannot tell you all; you will despise me, and it will break your heart."

"Speak, my son; may God strengthen me to bear all you have to say."

Alfred confessed the whole—the *first* falsehood about the grammar lesson, and the distress and wakefulness it had caused; the *second* to his mother, when she inquired the cause of his restlessness at night; and the *third* to Mr. Palmer, which arose from the fear that his father would meet his teacher, and hear that he was quite well on Saturday evening.

Mr. Singleton bowed his head upon his hands. He did not speak, but remained in this position for some time. Alfred went to his chamber, and threw himself upon his bed in an agony of grief. To see his father, his dear father, suffering for his fault was more than he could bear. "What can I do? what can I do?" he exclaimed. "The falsehood has been told, and cannot be untold. What does the blessed Bible say? 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him *return unto the Lord*, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'"

With a heavy heart Alfred took up his books, and went to school; his eyes were red with weeping, and he looked very unhappy. His schoolfellows tried to make him play, but he would not; and he was hurrying away after school, when Mr. Palmer stopped him, and kindly asked what was the matter.

"Oh, do not ask me! do not ask me!" said Alfred,

and he hurried off. He dreaded speaking, for he did not feel prepared to confess the whole to Mr. Palmer, and he feared he might again be tempted to depart from the truth. At the dinner table no one spoke. Mr. Singleton looked extremely sad, and Alfred saw by his mother's countenance that she had been weeping. What a different scene from that of the Saturday evening before! And how miserable did Alfred feel, as he witnessed the sorrow he had caused.

"I can bear this no longer," he said to himself; and after dinner he followed his father into his study. "Oh, father, my dear father, do forgive me!" he exclaimed; "only smile upon me once more, and I never, *never* will tell another lie. Can you not forgive me? I cannot bear to see you and mother looking so sorrowful."

"You have lost the smile of a kinder father, a better friend, than I am, Alfred. You broke the commandment of God some days since, and you must know that you are not receiving his approbation; for he has said, that 'lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.' I can punish you for this sin, but I have no power to make you better. God alone can do that. Your first offence is against him; obtain his forgiveness, and you will readily receive mine."

"I never will sin again in this way," said Alfred; "I will 'set a guard upon my lips, that I sin not with my tongue.'"

"You can promise this, Alfred, but you have not the power to keep your promise. Peter also promised. He *declared* that he would never deny his Master; but he was depending upon himself—upon his poor human strength; and what was the result? 'Before the cock crew,' he thrice denied his blessed Lord. Like you, he feared man more than God."

"But, father, what am I to do? Will God hear me if I pray? I am almost afraid to appear before him."

"You were *afraid* to confess your fault to me, Alfred; and now you rejoice that you have done so. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' God is a more tender parent than I am. He is *waiting* to be gracious. Go to him, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and claim his promise, that whosoever cometh to the Father through him shall in no wise be cast out. If you really *feel* your sin, you will be willing to go, like the publican, and say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

"We spoke of Peter—you have read the story of his repentance, and how his affectionate Master again received him into his service. This account is given us for a warning and an encouragement, that we may see the effect of real repentance, and imitate his zeal and fidelity. You must seek the help that cometh from above, and then you too may regain the lost favour of God.

"You next owe a duty to Mr. Palmer. It was to him you told your first falsehood: go to him, and confess all you have done."

"Oh, father, I cannot tell Mr. Palmer! Why need he know anything about it? If I should tell him, I fear he would never respect me any more."

"This is a test of your humility, Alfred. If you are truly humbled in the sight of God for your fault, you will be ready to confess it to man. Mr. Palmer is a Christian, and he will hear you as a Christian, and add his prayers to ours that you may be forgiven."

"Father, let me go now; I fear to put it off: let me go while I feel that it is my duty."

Alfred left the room, and Mr. Singleton heard him go into his chamber and shut the door. He was there some time, and when he came out, he went directly to the lodgings of Mr. Palmer. He found him alone, and made the same frank confession to him that he had to his father, and met with the same Christian sympathy.

I believe Alfred from this time resolved, in the fear of the Lord, to set a guard upon his lips. He certainly was very careful in all he said. He not only avoided direct falsehood, but the appearance of it. He did not make *one* hour *three*, nor say that a person who was hurt a little was *almost killed;* and that it took an *age* to do a thing that occupied half

an hour. It is this careless habit of using language that often leads to the sin we have been considering; and if we would begin at the root of the matter, we must begin by correcting this habit.

Dr. Johnson, a great and very learned man who lived in England many years ago, was known to be so careful about speaking the truth, that in his common conversation every circumstance was related *exactly* as it took place, in every particular. Of course, every one who listened to Dr. Johnson had perfect confidence in everything he said. He gave the following advice to parents:—

"Accustom your children to pay the most strict regard to truth, even in the smallest things. If a thing happened at one window, and they, in relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you *do not know where deviation from truth will end.* It is more from *carelessness* about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world."

Mr. and Mrs. Singleton perceived the change in Alfred with much gratitude, but still they withheld from him that perfect confidence which he so dearly loved, and had so fully enjoyed before his first sad departure from truth. This Alfred perceived, and it excited him to increased watchfulness and care. As he sought strength from his Saviour, he was enabled daily to resist some temptation, and this helped him

much; for, next to prayer, there is nothing that so much strengthens us to overcome a fault, as habitual resistance in little things.

God seeth not as man seeth, and great and small lies are equally offensive to him. The command of Scripture is, "Lie not one to another;" and, "He that offendeth in *one* point is guilty of *all*." If there is a willingness to deceive in the merest trifle, that willingness is as much a breach of God's law as a lie that produces the most dreadful consequences. Ananias and Sapphira met with the same punishment, though Ananias only *withheld the truth*, while Sapphira told a direct lie. It was agreed by a body of the early Christians that they would have all things in common. "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

It was expected that, after selling their possessions, each would bring *all* the money he received, and place it in the common treasury. Ananias kept a *part* of his property, and brought the remainder, and laid it at the apostles' feet. He said nothing. You see he did not *lie with his lips*. The lie was unto God, and we all lie unto God when we withhold the truth. Sapphira told a lie with her mouth, but it

does not appear that it was more offensive to the Almighty than that of her husband; for their *punishment was equal.*

It is said of the ancient Persians, that from the age of five to twenty years they instructed their children in only three things—to manage a horse, to make use of the bow, and to speak the truth. If heathen parents thus valued truth, how should Christian parents regard it. The Persians knew that, without it, no order, peace, or happiness could prevail on earth. *We* know this also; but we also know that truth is the foundation of God's throne, and that whosoever "maketh a lie" is to be for ever excluded from the presence of God, and the blessed company of just men made perfect.

There was to be an examination at Mr. Palmer's school. This was an interesting event to the young people. Every hand was busy in decorating the school-room, and in preparing for the eventful day. Rich garlands of evergreen surrounded the windows, among which were interspersed bouquets of brilliant flowers.

The faces of the younger children were full of animation as they took their seats at an early hour on Wednesday morning. There was an expression of anxiety on the countenances of the older scholars, who were to take a more important part in the exercises; for they knew many would be present whom

they respected and loved, and they felt anxious to obtain their approbation. The company assembled, and the exercises commenced. The classes in geography, grammar, history, and arithmetic were examined in turn; and the scholars did credit to their teacher and themselves. The voices of Alfred and Edward Singleton were distinctly heard, and their answers were always prompt and ready when a general question was proposed to the class.

Mr. Palmer read several pieces of composition which had been written by his pupils. There was usually a fictitious signature attached to them, or merely the initials of the author's name. There were many excellent pieces read; but there was one of remarkable merit, which was listened to with much interest and attention. When the teacher read the signature, "A. S.," the eyes of the audience and scholars were turned upon Alfred Singleton, for every one supposed him to be the author.

Alfred was delighted for a moment, for he loved to do well and to be praised; but he was *not* the author of the piece; and though *not a word* had been said, he perceived that it was the general impression that he had written it. He said to himself—"Surely it cannot be wrong to let this pass; as soon as school is done, Mr. Palmer and the boys will know that I did not write the piece." But again he reflected that there were many there that would go away with a

wrong impression if not undeceived. He could not feel satisfied; he loved the praise of man, but he had lately learned to desire still more the approbation of God.

Alfred was a timid boy, but the consciousness that he was doing right emboldened him; and during a pause in the exercises, he got up and said, "I did not write that piece of composition signed 'A. S.'" His face was covered with blushes as he hastily resumed his seat, and there was an expression of surprise on every countenance.

Mr. Singleton, at the request of the teacher, made a short address to the scholars, when the exercises were concluded. He spoke of their improvement, of the pleasure it had given their friends to perceive it, and of the high advantages they were enjoying. "But after all, my young friends," he continued, "wisdom is the principal thing. In the words of the wise Solomon, let me say to you, 'Therefore get *wisdom*, and with all thy getting get understanding.' The knowledge you are now acquiring will be of little use to you, unless you add to it *that* which 'maketh wise to salvation.' Then try, whether you are at study or any other employment, to do all things to the glory of God; to look up to him for his blessing on *everything* you undertake.

"The good Legh Richmond said to his daughters, 'Engage in no employment in which you cannot

look up to God, and say, Bless me in this, O my Father.'

"Let the Bible be your *first* study. 'The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.' These words are full of truth; and you will all find, that as you increase in heavenly science, your minds will be enlarged and made capable of better understanding the various branches of human knowledge. Try to excel, that you may *please God.* Let his approbation be the *supreme* object of your desire. You will find him ever ready to bestow it, and your own hearts will tell you when you possess it.

"And now," concluded Mr. Singleton, "as all our works, to be of any value, must be begun, continued, and ended with God, let us approach his throne of grace, and, thanking him for past mercies, implore his direction and blessing for the future."

After prayer, the scholars united in singing the following hymn:—

"Oh, in the morn of life, when youth
With vital ardour glows,
And shines in all the fairest charms
That beauty can disclose,—

"Deep in thy soul, before its powers
Are yet by vice enslaved,
Be thy Creator's glorious name
And character engraved.

"Ere yet the shades of sorrow cloud
The sunshine of thy days;
And cares and toils, in endless round,
Encompass all thy ways:

"Ere yet thy heart the woes of age,
With vain regret, deplore,
And sadly muse on former joys,
Gone, to return no more.

"True wisdom, early sought and gained,
In age will give thee rest;
Oh, then, improve the morn of life,
To make its evening blest."

After the company had left the house, Mr. Palmer said to the scholars, "You recollect that the author of the best piece of composition is entitled to a reward. When I offered it to you, it was to encourage you to *do well;* not to excel each other, but to *excel yourselves.* The author of the composition signed 'A. S.' may rise and take this volume, which, while he receives it as the reward of successful effort, will teach him to 'think lowly of himself,' and to give all the praise to Him from whom he receives the capacity to do well."

Mr. Palmer held in his hand a beautiful copy of the Holy Bible. On its morocco covers these words were inscribed, "Believe, obey, and be happy." No one advanced to receive it. The scholars looked at each other, and then at their teacher, who said,

"There is but one scholar absent—Stephen Abbot: he must be the author of this piece: he is one of my most attentive boys, and I am surprised that he is not in his place: I fear he is sick. Alfred Singleton, you are his friend: you shall take his reward to him. I am sure it will give you pleasure, and he will be glad to receive it from your hand."

Alfred took the volume, and with a light step proceeded to the house of his friend. The windows were all closed, and there was no sound in the little garden before the house. Stephen's little dog, Carlo, was lying on the door-step, and did not, as usual, run to meet Alfred with his welcome bark.

Alfred opened the door, and meeting no one, went to Stephen's room. He was not there, and he turned to the door of Mrs. Abbot's room, and knocked. Stephen came to the door. "Oh, I am so glad to see you!" he exclaimed; "my dear mother has been very sick all night, and I have been up alone with her. The doctor left us at three o'clock this morning, and thought her comfortable, but still she is very sick. Come in softly, Alfred; she will be glad to see you."

Mrs. Abbot held out her hand to Alfred. "I am pleased that you have come," she said; "you will tell my dear boy about the examination. My sickness has prevented him from attending, but he has expressed no disappointment. Now go by yourselves,

and talk about the school. Perhaps I shall fall asleep; and should I wish for anything, I will ring my little bell."

Alfred and Stephen went out, and sat down together near the door of Mrs. Abbot's room. "I hope you all did well to-day, Alfred," said Stephen; "I have thought much of you, and asked God to bless you. I wished much to be at school, but I have been quite happy at home."

"We all did pretty well, I believe, Stephen; but we missed you, particularly when no one appeared to receive the prize for the best composition. Do you know who wrote under the signature 'A. S.'?"

"Why, that was my piece, Alfred. I reversed the initials of my name for a signature; but little did I think it would receive the prize. I am glad it was approved; for the subject was a great and good one —namely, 'How are we to understand and keep the commandment—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart'? I took my subject from the Holy Scriptures, and the same sacred pages directed me how to treat it."

"And a copy of those Scriptures is your reward, dear Stephen," said Alfred, as he took the Bible from a paper. "Mr. Palmer allowed me the pleasure of bringing it to you, and I am sure it will prove an acceptable gift. I am glad it has fallen into the hands of one who knows so well how to use it."

"Oh that *all* might know it, from the least to the greatest!" exclaimed Stephen. "This will gratify my dear mother; for she loves to have her child approved. How thoughtful it was in you to bring it to me so soon, Alfred; but I dare say it gave your kind heart almost as much pleasure as it has me to receive it."

"I have been thinking, Stephen, that it is even so. When the composition was read and approved, and the signature given, all eyes turned upon me, and for one moment I felt delighted at being supposed the author; but in a moment after truth prevailed. I knew it was wrong to have a false impression rest upon the minds of the audience; for they would go away, and it could not be explained to them; so I gathered up courage, and got up and said that I did not write it. I felt awkward and very much confused; but I cannot tell you how glad I was when it was over. I have thought, since I came here, and have witnessed your happiness, that the pleasure was much greater than it would have been to have received the prize myself."

"You are a generous friend, dear Alfred, and I rejoice that you have been able to make another conquest over what you call your besetting sin. You will find yourself strengthened by every such effort, and I trust God will finish the good work he seems to have begun in you."

Stephen now returned to his mother, and after giving her some nourishment, showed her his Bible, and told her why he had received it. Her eye brightened, and her pale countenance was lightened with a smile. "I am glad you have received it, my dear child," she said; "the best of all *prizes*—a copy of the Holy Scriptures. May it be a lamp to your feet, and a light to your path."

How different were the feelings of Alfred, as he laid himself down upon his bed the night after the examination, from those we have described on the day in which he told his *first falsehood!* Then, he dared not pray. As he knelt to perform his evening devotions, something kept him back, and he felt that he could not lay his gift upon God's altar. He could not sleep; for God, who giveth his children rest, was looking on him with displeasure. Now, he knelt with a calm and peaceful mind beside his little bed; and first thanking God for the strength he had given him that day, he humbly asked for a continuance of that grace which he now felt could alone keep him from falling. He then asked, in the Saviour's name, that he might be restored to the confidence of his parents, and hold the place in their esteem which he once possessed; that they might perceive that he was striving for a new heart and a new spirit; and that he might show them that he had no longer those "lying lips" that are an abomination to the Lord.

Alfred then lay down and slept quietly, and when the morning sun called him forth to his duties, he remembered Him who has promised to be with His children in their rising up and in their lying down. God heard and helped him. He daily renewed his strength, and gave him power to overcome evil with good; and we trust his name is now written among those who are admitted to be *within* the gate of the blessed city "whose builder and maker is God."

